

TURNING ASPIRATIONS INTO REALITY:  
ENSURING FEMALE AND MINORITY REPRESENTATION IN THE US AIR  
FORCE OFFICER CORPS AND SENIOR LEADER RANKS

BY  
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## APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets masters-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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Col Peter W. Huggins (Date)

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Dr. Thomas Hughes (Date)

## DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

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Major Scovill W. Currin received his commission through ROTC at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, (B.A. in English) in 1997. Graduating from Undergraduate Pilot Training at Columbus AFB, MS in 1999, he went on to fly KC-135's at Fairchild AFB, WA as aircraft commander, instructor pilot, and evaluator pilot. During his time in the KC-135, he flew combat and combat support missions in support of Operations Southern Watch, Northern Watch and Enduring Freedom. In 2003, he was selected for the Air Force Intern Program where he served in various divisions on the Joint Staff and Air Staff. In 2005, he was selected for Air Mobility Command's Phoenix Reach program and transitioned to the C-17. Stationed at Charleston AFB, SC, he served as aircraft commander and instructor pilot and flew combat missions in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Major Currin is an Air Force senior pilot with over 2300 flying hours and 181 combat/combat support missions. He is a graduate of George Washington University with a M.A. in Organizational Management. Major Currin is married to the former Lisa Herman of Spokane, WA. They have a beautiful daughter, Tessa (1).

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## ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of diversity within the US Air Force officer corps and senior leader ranks. Throughout the analysis, the project strives to answer the following research question: *Does the US Air Force have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions? If not, why not? How can the US Air Force improve the situation?* Admittedly, this research question also comes with an inherent difficulty. In the end, how does a researcher define “sufficient diversity?” Empirical research is quite clear that no optimal level of diversity exists. Instead, a sufficient level of organizational diversity is often context dependent and different for every organization.

Despite this difficulty, the research project does provide an objective evaluation of US Air Force diversity with the aid of diversity literature and detailed data comparisons. Although the study concludes that the US Air Force *does not* have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions, the US Air Force must decide for itself what constitutes an appropriate level of diversity. This research project simply aids in that evaluation and is not intended to dictate an optimal level of diversity.

Chapter One lays a theoretical foundation by examining the evolving definition of diversity and presents arguments as to why organizations – and military organizations in particular – should strive for a diverse workforce. Chapter Two presents detailed data on current and historical US Air Force demographics and provides context through comparisons to other military services, the civilian population, and the enlisted force. Chapter Three offers a comprehensive analysis of the officer career pipeline and draws on current diversity literature and proven best practices to offer recommendations on improving the diversity of tomorrow’s force.

To its credit, the US Air Force appears to recognize the importance of fielding a diverse force. This project offers analysis and recommendations on translating organizational diversity aspirations into reality.



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## Introduction

### US Air Force Diversity: A Starting Point

*“We must make sure the American military continues to be a great engine of progress and equality – all the better to defend our people and our values against adversaries around the globe.”*

*- Dr. Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense*

With the signing of Executive Order 9981 in 1948, President Harry Truman declared, “there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.”<sup>1</sup> On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Truman’s integration of the armed forces, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, stated that the legacy of integration “has made a huge difference in the quality of our armed forces and the representational aspects of all our ethnic backgrounds in our military today...Integration is a great strength, not just for our military, but for our nation.”<sup>2</sup> Since President Truman’s groundbreaking Executive Order, the armed forces have served as the vanguard in promoting diversity and equality. Following in the footsteps of the Tuskegee Airmen and Buffalo Soldiers, African-Americans have risen to the rank of four-star general and served at the highest levels of the US military. From the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) of World War II to the first female Thunderbird pilot, females have moved from administration offices to the cockpits of the most sophisticated fighter aircraft in the world. Despite this progress, Admiral Mullen warned the military services to avoid complacency in their quest for fielding a diverse fighting force: “We need to keep focusing on integration and keep developing leaders from all backgrounds that individuals can look up to.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Order 9981, Establishing the President’s Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, 26 July 1948. <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/9981.htm> (accessed 8 May 09).

<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Carden, “Mullen Discusses Importance of Integrated Force,” *American Forces Press Service*, 31 July 2008, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=50659> (accessed 5 May 09).

<sup>3</sup> Carden, “Mullen Discusses Importance of Integrated Force.”

In recent years, the US Air Force has embraced the value of force diversity. In the spring of 2008, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne issued the Air Force Diversity Statement which declared, “Air Force capabilities and warfighting skills are enhanced by diversity among its Airmen.”<sup>4</sup> In a 2009 Letter to Airmen, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley recognized that each Airman “represents a broad range of diverse missions, family situations, ethnicities, faiths, races and educational backgrounds. Yet together, this rich tapestry forms the world's finest Air Force drawn from the best talent that America has to offer.”<sup>5</sup> After 60 years of progress, the US Air Force now views diversity as a key element of mission effectiveness rather than a mandate driven by Presidential decree.

In light of the US Air Force’s dedication to fielding a diverse force, this project strives to answer the following research question:

*Does the US Air Force have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions? If not, why not? How can the US Air Force improve the situation?*

This study purposefully focuses on the officer corps for several reasons. First, if diversity and mission performance are truly linked, it is appropriate to focus on diversity at the senior, strategic decision-making levels. Second, officers traditionally serve as spokesmen for the US military. As a result, diversity in the officer corps is an essential component in the American public’s perception of the US military. Finally, the officer corps has traditionally been less diverse than the enlisted force. This imbalance has historically damaged the relationship between superiors and subordinates and renders analysis of the officer corps and its diversity even more vital.<sup>6</sup> For many of these same reasons, this project gives special emphasis to diversity in the US Air Force general officer corps. To answer the overall research question, this project consists of three primary chapters and a concluding chapter with final recommendations.

Chapter One lays a theoretical foundation by examining the evolving definition of diversity. Over the last 20 years, the term diversity has expanded beyond the domain of

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<sup>4</sup> Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, Air Force Diversity Statement, 27 March 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Michael B. Donley, Secretary of the Air Force, Letter to Airmen, 17 February 2009, <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/secaf.asp?id=449> (accessed 5 May 09).

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter One, page 7, for a discussion on the damaging diversity imbalance between the officer and enlisted corps during the Vietnam War.

the traditional Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) protected groups – race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age. The chapter examines these changes and their effects on organizations’ desire to promote diversity. In addition, the chapter also examines why organizations – and military organizations in particular – would strive for a diverse workforce. As the excerpts from 2008 Air Force Diversity Statement above imply, the US Air Force increasingly views diversity as an integral component of mission effectiveness. As a result, Chapter One presents historical and current research behind the theory that an organization’s diversity is directly related to its effectiveness. Finally, the chapter details the growing importance of purposeful diversity management. The ultimate goal of Chapter One is to arm the reader with both a historical and current view of diversity in order to better evaluate the US Air Force’s efforts at increasing force diversity.

Chapter Two’s main objective is to present data and provide context in order to answer the first portion of this work’s overall research question – Does the US Air Force have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions? The chapter presents detailed data on current and historical US Air Force demographics. This thorough presentation aids in comparing the official US Air Force desire for diversity with actual force diversity. The chapter strives to move beyond simple presentation and provide context with a wide span of comparisons, both internal and external to the US Air Force. To that end, the chapter compares US Air Force officer diversity with other military services, the civilian population, and the enlisted force. Finally, research closely examines the level of diversity in the senior leader echelons.

Chapter Three strives to answer the second, and perhaps more important, aspect of the research question – If the US Air Force does not have sufficient diversity in its officer corps, how can the organization improve the situation? In pursuit of an appropriate answer, the chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of the officer career pipeline to include recruiting/accessions, retention/promotion, and advancement to the senior leader echelons. This comprehensive approach allows for more accurate analysis of current organizational diversity and also pinpoints areas for improvement within the closed personnel system. The chapter also highlights the importance of purposeful diversity management in reaping the benefits of a diverse force. Finally, the chapter

offers recommendations for enhancing workforce diversity based on current diversity literature and proven best practices. While Chapter Two evaluates current US Air Force diversity, Chapter Three provides recommendations to improve the diversity of tomorrow's force.

The project concludes with final recommendations. These recommendations draw on the data and analysis presented throughout the project. First, the conclusion evaluates the current US Air Force definition of diversity and analyzes the organization's desire to link diversity with improved mission performance. Second, the conclusion highlights organizational shortcomings in fielding a diverse officer corps with final recommendations on ameliorating those shortcomings. Third, the final section offers recommendations for improving diversity at various points in an officer's career progression, including recruiting, accessions, and retention. Finally, the conclusion highlights the importance of diversity in the Pilot career field and its subsequent role in diversity at the general officer level.

The official US Air Force definition of diversity creates difficulties in an evaluative study of this kind. An obvious research method is to compare the organization's stated definition of diversity with current diversity and draw appropriate conclusions. The organization's official definition includes a myriad of qualities, including "personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical/spiritual perspectives" in addition to the traditional categories of race, ethnicity and gender.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, almost all available data pertains to the traditional categories of race, ethnicity, and gender. This dichotomy between definitional diversity and data the US Air Force monitors is noted throughout the project. Although the US Air Force recognizes that diversity is more than race, ethnicity, and gender, available data makes analysis beyond these categories difficult if not impossible.

The overall research question – does the US Air Force have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions – also comes with an inherent difficulty. In

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<sup>7</sup> Airman's Roll Call, Week of 12 November – 18 November 2008  
<http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-081113-064.pdf> (accessed 8 May 2009).

the end, how does a researcher define “sufficient diversity?” Empirical research is quite clear that no optimal level of diversity exists. Instead, a sufficient level of organizational diversity is often context dependent and different for every organization. As a result, this project rarely presents US Air Force diversity data in isolation for evaluative purposes. For example, US Air Force racial demographics are meaningless until compared to the other military services or the civilian population. Retention and promotion rates are equally context dependent. For example, female officer retention and promotion rates offer little value until compared to male rates. Despite this difficulty, the research project does provide an objective evaluation of US Air Force diversity with the aid of diversity literature and detailed data comparisons. In the end, however, the US Air Force must decide its own sufficient level of diversity. This research project simply aids in that evaluation and is not intended to dictate an optimal level of diversity.



## Chapter 1

### Diversity: Its Meaning and Importance

*If the whole society is not part of the military, then you don't have the backing of that whole society. You have a backing of a fraction of that society. The public recognizes its diverse military has a difficult job and unifies behind it. That moral authority is crucially important to the military's ability to operate.*

*- Dr. David Chu,  
Undersecretary of Defense  
for Personnel and Readiness*

In the spring of 2008, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne issued the Air Force Diversity Statement which declared, “Air Force capabilities and warfighting skills are enhanced by diversity among its Airmen.”<sup>1</sup> In his 2009 Commander’s Letter of Intent, General Norton Schwartz, the newly confirmed Air Force Chief of Staff, ranked diversity initiatives alongside more traditional military efforts such as supporting the Global War on Terrorism and reinvigorating the nuclear enterprise.<sup>2</sup> These statements and actions reveal an emerging organizational belief that diversity is not only about fair representation, but it is also an essential element of warfighting effectiveness. As a result, this chapter serves two purposes. First, individuals and organizations often use the term diversity without a foundational agreement on its actual meaning. To that end, the chapter presents a historical and enlightening evolution of the term diversity. Second, organizations’ motivations for achieving a diverse workforce have also evolved. The latter half of this chapter examines why organizations – and military organizations in particular – would strive for a diverse workforce and presents historical and current research behind the theory that an organization’s diversity is directly related to its effectiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, Air Force Diversity Statement, 27 March 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Michael D. Donley, Secretary of the Air Force, and General Norton Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff, to MAJCOM Commanders and HAF 2-Letters, Dual Signed Letter of Intent, memorandum, 22 Jan 2009.

## Diversity: An Evolving Term

During the 1970's and into the 1980's, the term diversity was most often synonymous with fair and proportionate representation from different demographic groups – commonly termed “demographic diversity.”<sup>3</sup> Traditionally, this demographic diversity was restricted to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) protected groups – race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age.<sup>4</sup> Although the term has evolved and expanded, researchers still point to the benefits of the traditional definition for several reasons. First, demographic diversity based on legally protected groups is grounded in history, easy to understand, continually relevant, and quantifiably measurable.<sup>5</sup> Second, power imbalances and discrimination still exist among the traditional demographic groups, and some researchers believe expansion of the term only dilutes efforts to promote diversity.<sup>6</sup> Many scholars, however, claim that the traditional definition excludes other groups, unduly links Equal Opportunity with diversity, and ignores traditional skill gaps among certain demographic groups.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of the debate over traditional demographic diversity, the definition and understanding of diversity continues to evolve and expand.

During the 1990's, diversity expanded to include categories such as language, talent, experience and even personality.<sup>8</sup> In a 2004 Defense Business Board report on diversity in the Department of Defense's senior ranks, the task group declared modern diversity “has an amorphous and changing definition that includes race, gender, and sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, country of origin, ways of thinking, experience, education, cultural background and even values.”<sup>9</sup> Diversity's definition continues to expand, more frequently including ill-defined traits such as attitudes, cognitive abilities,

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<sup>3</sup> Nelson Lim, Michelle Cho, and Kimberly Curry, *Planning for Diversity: Options and Recommendations for DoD Leaders*, RAND Report MG-743 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), 15.

<sup>4</sup> Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, [http://www.eeoc.gov/abouteeo/overview\\_laws.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/abouteeo/overview_laws.html) (accessed 7 March 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Taylor H. Cox Jr., *Cultural Diversity in Organizations: Theory, Research, and Practice* (San Francisco CA: Berrett-Koehler, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Elsie Y. Cross, *Managing Diversity: The Courage to Lead* (Westport, CT: Corum Books, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Lim, *Planning for Diversity*, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret S. Stockdale and Faye J. Crosby, eds., *The Psychology and Management of Workplace Diversity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Defense Business Board, *Task Group on Increasing Diversity in DoD's Flag and Senior Executive Ranks*, Report FY03-9 (Washington, DC: Defense Business Board, March 2004), 7.

decision-making styles and skills, and social networking differentials.<sup>10</sup> This expanded definition is not without its critics. By expanding beyond the legally protected groups, organizations may appear to be abandoning efforts to improve representation of traditional demographics.<sup>11</sup> This expansive definition of diversity also creates problems for both measuring diversity and holding leaders accountable for implementation. Under this construct, an organization faces new, perhaps impossible, challenges of tracking, measuring, and codifying its workforce's personalities, decision-making styles, and attitudes. Even with the expanded definition and understanding of diversity, the emphasis has traditionally been on individuals' differences – a concept some have come to question.

In his work, *Redefining Diversity*, Roosevelt Thomas presents a new vision of diversity that is not “synonymous with differences, but encompasses differences and similarities.”<sup>12</sup> In this construct, Thomas suggests a micro/macro continuum. A micro view examines individual components and thus focuses on differences. The macro view, however, incorporates the entire mixture, accounting for similarities as well. Organizations must appreciate that these “component elements in diversity mixtures can vary, and so a discussion of diversity must specify the dimensions in question.”<sup>13</sup> These similar and dissimilar dimensions might very well include individual characteristics such as race or gender, but also might include more abstract entities such as personalities or cognitive skills. Regardless, organizations must recognize and acknowledge which elements constitute their definition of diversity in order to successfully integrate their workforce's similarities and differences.

Despite the definitions presented so far, various scholars conclude diversity is beyond the bounds of simplified definitions. Some researchers propose the term diversity “has very little history within the behavioral sciences and is not (yet) a scientific construct” and instead is a phenomenon that “sprang to life recently, nourished by

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<sup>10</sup> S.E. Jackson, A. Joshi, and N. Erhardt, “Recent Research on Team and Organizational Diversity: SWOT Analysis and Implications,” *Journal of Management* 29, no. 6 (2003): 801-803.

<sup>11</sup> Catherine Masar, “Diversity Versus Affirmative Action for the United States Navy,” (master's thesis, U.S. Army War College, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Roosevelt Thomas, *Redefining Diversity* (New York: American Management Association, 1996), 5

<sup>13</sup> Thomas, *Redefining Diversity*, 8.

widespread media coverage of the ‘managing diversity’ activities.”<sup>14</sup> In the end, there is no research consensus on the one, true definition of diversity.<sup>15</sup> Oftentimes, researchers and organizations resort to descriptive modifiers to clarify and distinguish different models of diversity. For example, in a recent study on the impact of diversity on Air Force mission performance, the researchers established four distinct types of diversity:

1. Demographic – Inherent or socially defined characteristics, including age, race/ethnicity, religion, and gender
2. Cognitive – Working, thinking, and learning styles, including extroversion/introversion, Type A/Type B personalities, and quick, decisive thinking versus slow, methodical thinking
3. Structural – Organizational background characteristics, including Service, work function, and component (Active, Reserve and Guard)
4. Global – National affiliation other than US<sup>16</sup>

Although there is a danger of further confusion, these categories ensure a blended concept of diversity – incorporating the traditional, legally protected groups along with modern diversity constructs.

Although the terms and concepts presented thus far have been general in nature, Table 1 below illustrates the specific military services’ definition of diversity.<sup>17</sup> A casual glance at the varied definitions reveals several of the concepts already discussed. Interestingly, the Marine Corps is the only service that specifically highlights both differences and similarities. The Air Force is the only service that captures specificities within its definition while other services are content with generalities. Each service, however, highlights a distinct aspect of modern diversity. From the Navy’s “enhance the

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<sup>14</sup> S.E. Jackson, K.E. May, and K. Whitney, “Understanding the Dynamics of Diversity in Decision-Making Teams,” in *Team Effectiveness and Decision-Making in Organizations*, eds R.A. Guzzo, E. Salas, et al (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 204-261.

<sup>15</sup> S.E. Jackson and M.N. Ruderman, *Diversity in Work Teams* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Amanda Kraus et al, *The Impact of Diversity on Air Force Mission Performance: Analysis of Deployed Service-member’s Perceptions of the Diversity/Capability Relationship*, Center of Naval Analyses (CNA) Report D0015452.A2 (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2007), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Lim, *Planning for Diversity*, 16 (Army Definition), Navy Personnel Command <http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/Diversity/> (Navy Definition, accessed 13 May 09). Lim, *Planning for Diversity*, 16 (Marine Corps Definition), Airman’s Roll Call, Week 12 Nov 2008 – 18 Nov 2008, <http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-081113-064.pdf> (AF Definition, accessed 13 May 09).

**Table 1: Military Services Diversity Definitions**

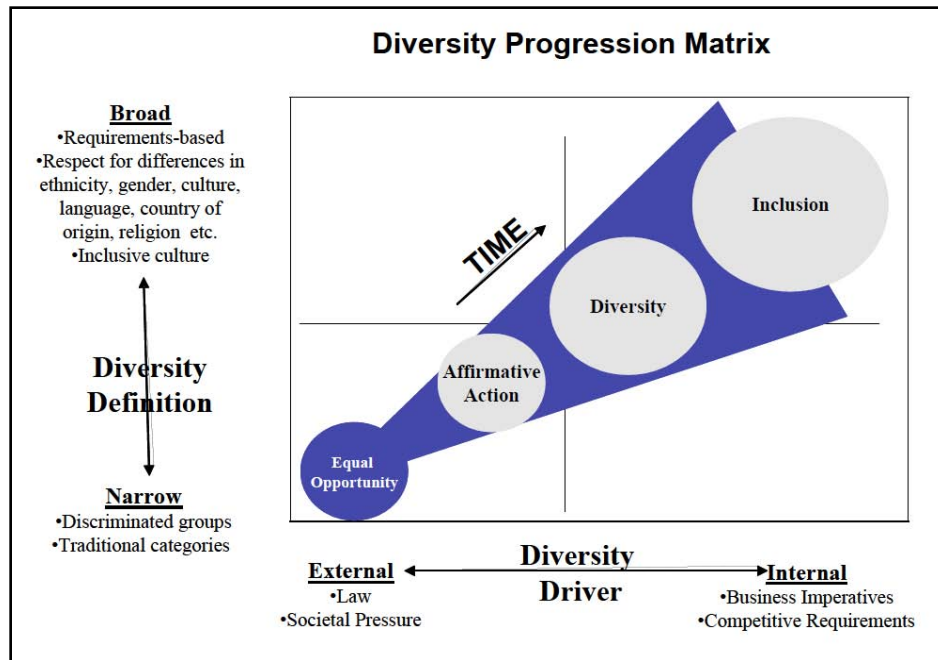
Army	Differences in Soldiers and civilians that can have a positive impact on mission effectiveness in the Army.
Navy	Diversity is all the different characteristics and attributes of individual Sailors and civilians that enhance the mission readiness of the Navy.
Marine Corps	An inclusive culture that recognizes and values the similarities and differences of individuals to effectively meet the goals of the organization.
Air Force	Diversity is broadly defined as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission. Air Force Diversity includes, but is not limited to, personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical/spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity and gender.

“mission readiness” to the Army’s “positive impact on mission effectiveness, each definition overtly implies that increased diversity directly relates to improved organizational performance. This modern phenomenon helps explain diversity’s evolving definition and why organizations – and military organizations in particular – would strive for a diverse force.

Figure 1 below succinctly illustrates this relationship between diversity’s evolving definition and organizations’ motivations for promoting a diverse force.<sup>18</sup> The concept of diversity broadened and expanded from simple legal compliance to a culture of inclusion as the diversity drivers began to shift. Initially, organizations emphasized diversity to ensure Equal Opportunity compliance and avoid legal pitfalls. Over the last two decades, however, organizations – both from the corporate and military sectors – realized that a diverse workforce might actually contribute to increased organizational effectiveness. In the corporate world, organizations increasingly view diversity as a competitive advantage. Countless articles on diversity and its relation to profit and competitive advantage populate the internet. In the military arena, as the diversity definitions indicate above, the military services have followed suit by emphasizing diversity as a means to increase military effectiveness. The remainder of this chapter analyzes the various

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<sup>18</sup> Defense Business Board Report, *Task Group on Increasing Diversity*, 8.



**Figure 1: Diversity Progression Matrix**

Source: Defense Business Board, Task Group on Increasing Diversity in DoD's Flag and Senior Executive Ranks, Report FY03-9, 7

arguments for a diversified workforce with emphasis on unique military organization characteristics and the effect of diversity on organizational effectiveness.

### Arguments for a Diverse Force

Military organizations are different from civilian organizations as a result of their mission to defend the nation and wage its wars. Therefore, demographic and diverse representation in the armed forces is equally unique. In a democracy, it is traditionally held that a “broadly representative military force is more likely to uphold national values and to be loyal to the government...that raised it.”<sup>19</sup> This logic and need for assurance of military loyalty drives the traditional American distrust, particularly prior to World War II, of permanent, standing armies.<sup>20</sup> Including the military, but not exclusive to the armed forces, is the notion that all citizens in a liberal democracy should have access to and the ability to contribute to the policy-making process.<sup>21</sup> Although most diversity issues center on the “equity of opportunity,” the “equity of burden” is an equally powerful force

<sup>19</sup> David Armor, “Race and Gender in the U.S. Military,” *Armed Forces and Society* 23 (Fall 96): 7-27.

<sup>20</sup> David R. Segal, *Recruiting for Uncle Sam* (Lawrence, KS: University Press, 1989).

<sup>21</sup> Amanda Kraus and Martha Farnsworth Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, Center of Naval Analyses (CNA) Report D0013197.A2 (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2006).

in the relationship between military organizations and diversity.<sup>22</sup>

Along with the tradition of equal opportunity in the US military is the tenet that the burden and sacrifice of warfare should be borne equally. During the buildup to Desert Storm in the early 1990's, Jesse Jackson and other African-American leaders criticized the fact that 30% of the troops deploying to the Gulf were Black in comparison to a US population that was 11% Black.<sup>23</sup> These protestations follow in the tradition of the perception that Blacks bore an unfair burden of casualties during Vietnam.<sup>24</sup> In fact, Ronald Walters, Chairman of the Political Science Department at Howard University, recommended quotas to limit demographic representation in the armed forces to population proportions after Desert Storm.<sup>25</sup> These cannon fodder accusations are striking when compared to Black leaders petitioning President Roosevelt during World War II to ensure Blacks had the right to enter combat.<sup>26</sup> These balancing notions of equal opportunity and burden serve to highlight the intricacies and emotional elements ever-present when dealing with diversity and military organizations.

Although the above examples deal with equal opportunity and burden in the aggregate, there is historical precedence for ensuring diversification specific to both enlisted and officer ranks. During the Vietnam era, military officials realized the damaging repercussions when a diversity imbalance poisoned the relationship between superiors and subordinates. In the 1960's and 1970's, integration increased the percentage of Blacks in the enlisted force while the officer corps remained largely homogenous. For example, at the end of the Vietnam War, only 2.3 percent of military officers were Black compared to 12.6 percent in the enlisted force.<sup>27</sup> Although this imbalance might not be completely causal, the armed forces nevertheless "suffered

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<sup>22</sup> Armor, "Race and Gender in the U.S. Military," 8.

<sup>23</sup> Juan Williams, "Race and War in the Persian Gulf," *The Washington Post*, 20 January 1991, B2.

<sup>24</sup> Aline O. Quester and Curtis L. Gilroy, *America's Military: A Coat of Many Colors*, Center of Naval Analyses (CNA) Report D0004368.A1 (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2001). Quester and Gilroy conclude that black fatalities amounted to 12.1 to 13.1 percent of all Americans killed – a figure proportionate to the size of their civilian population and actually lower than their percentage in the US Army at the time of the Vietnam War, suggesting that the arguments about black casualties in Vietnam were overstated by some commentators.

<sup>25</sup> Lloyd J. Matthews and Tinaz Pavri, eds, *Population Diversity and the U.S. Army* (Strategic Studies Institute, June 1999), 4.

<sup>26</sup> Arch Puddington, "Black Leaders vs. Desert Storm," *Commentary* 91, no. 5 (May 1991), 28.

<sup>27</sup> Quester and Gilroy, *America's Military*, 3. For comparison purposes, US Census Bureau data from this era puts total US Black representation at 11.1 percent.

increased racial polarization, pervasive disciplinary problems, and racially motivated incidents in Vietnam and on posts around the world.”<sup>28</sup> In his US Army War College research project, Lt Col E.J. Mason declared that the “racial problem was so critical that it [the Army] was on the verge of self-destruction.”<sup>29</sup> Although this example highlights a specific historical imbalance of African-Americans in the officer and enlisted ranks, the lesson applies to any demographic or diversity gap between the officers and enlisted ranks.

In addition, the American military has long served as the vanguard in race relations and various diversity issues – often playing the role of social messenger. President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 in the summer of 1948, ending segregation in the US armed forces. Americans of all races, religions, and cultures served alongside each other in the 1950’s and 1960’s while Jim Crow segregation raged outside the ranks. Over the past 60 years, the US armed forces have provided a “bridging environment” for minorities seeking upward mobility.<sup>30</sup> The US military still finds great pride in its role as social messenger. On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Truman desegregation order, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates remarked, “We must make sure the American military continues to be a great engine of progress and equality – all the better to defend our values against adversaries around the globe.”<sup>31</sup> The message of social justice echoes outside the borders of the US as well. General “Kip” Ward, the AFRICOM Combatant Commander and only the fifth African-American four-star general, believes the armed forces’ history of equal opportunity and diversity sends a strong message to international partners and foes on the importance the US grants to

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<sup>28</sup> Lt Gen Julius W. Becton, et al, *amicus curiae* brief in support of respondent, *Gratz v Bollinger*, 123 S. Ct. 2411, 539 U.S. 244, June 23, 2003, and *Grutter v Bollinger*, 123 S. Ct. 2325, 539 U.S. 306, June 23 2003. See Note 42 for a more detailed explanation on *amicus curiae* briefs and the Michigan admissions cases.

<sup>29</sup> E.J. Mason, “Diversity: 2015 and the Afro-American Army Officer” (Research Project, US Army War College, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Brenda Moore and Schuyler Webb, “Perceptions of Equal Opportunity Among Women and Minority Army Personnel,” *Sociological Inquiry* 70, no. 2 (2000): 215-239.

<sup>31</sup> Gerry J. Gilmore, “Truman’s Military Desegregation Order Reflects American Values, Gates Says,” *American Forces Press Service*, 23 July 2008, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=50583> (accessed 7 March 2009).



rights and liberties.<sup>32</sup> Although intangible, this proud heritage of social justice provides a modern argument for ensuring diversity has a place in today's armed forces.

To this point, the arguments for ensuring a diverse workforce have been unique to military organizations. Although additional arguments for a diverse workforce exist, they have traditionally applied to the civilian sector. Several of these arguments, however, still apply to military organizations. The first of these is the theory of access and legitimacy. The most common version of this argument "asserts that a workforce that mirrors the consumer marketplace will improve its market position."<sup>33</sup> For example, customers are more likely to relate with sales personnel that resemble them – a relationship that typically leads to better sales. In turn, a diverse workforce is also able to better understand the needs and wants of a diverse customer base.<sup>34</sup> Kraus and Riche directly relate this concept to the US Air Force. In their view, the general-public serves as military stakeholders and customers, and the access/legitimacy argument derives from "the assumption that representation is essential for gaining and maintaining legitimacy in a democratic system."<sup>35</sup> In other words, by resembling the public it serves, the military is more likely to gain legitimacy, and therefore public support, during times of conflict. In the case of the access/legitimacy argument for diversity, concepts created for the civilian sector have clear parallels to military organizations.

Although the access and legitimacy arguments have a long tradition, a modern and potentially compelling argument centers on the theory that a diverse workforce inherently produces superior results or enhances mission effectiveness. In the civilian sector, organizations describe this theory as the business case argument – a diverse workforce provides a competitive advantage and ultimately enhances the bottom line. Military organizations have adopted the same concept in their quest for a diverse force. In their diversity definitions, both the Navy's "enhance the mission readiness" and the Army's "positive impact on mission effectiveness," verbiage clearly, and formally,

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<sup>32</sup> Lance D. Davis, "AFRICOM Cdr: Army's Diversity Example for Partner Nations," *Army News Service*, March 2004, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2009/03/04/17763-africom-cdr--armys-diversity-example-for-partner-nations/> (accessed 1 March 2008).

<sup>33</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, 22.

<sup>34</sup> Stella Nkomo and Ellen Ernst Kossek, "Managing Diversity: Human Resource Issues," in *Managing Human Resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: From Core Concepts to Strategic Choice, Module 9*, eds. Ellen Ernst Kossek and R. Block (Cincinnati, OH: Southwestern, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, 18.

propose that diversity directly enhances performance.<sup>36</sup> In the 2004 US Air Force Plan for Integrating Diversity, the service acknowledged that diversity “is more than demographic representation, a legal obligation, or a correction for historical injustices. Diversity is essential to our ability to demonstrate our core competencies.”<sup>37</sup> Confirming this theory in 2008, Secretary of the Air Force Wynne declared “Air Force capabilities and warfighting skills are enhanced by diversity among it Airmen.”<sup>38</sup> Over the last decade, military leaders have increasingly espoused increased mission effectiveness as the prime driver for maintaining a diverse force.

Perhaps the most astounding example of this movement was the 2003 *amicus curiae* brief submitted to the US Supreme Court, urging the court to uphold the University of Michigan’s admission policies.<sup>39</sup> Signed by 29 former military and civilian Department of Defense leaders, experts have declared the product one of the “most important Amicus Curiae Briefs ever submitted to the Supreme Court.”<sup>40</sup> The signatories of the document included former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretaries of Defense, Service Chiefs, and several retired four-star generals. Based on decades of experience, these individuals collectively concluded that a “highly qualified, racially diverse officer corps, educated and trained to command our nation’s racially diverse enlisted ranks is essential to the military’s ability to fulfill its principal mission to provide national security.”<sup>41</sup> The brief carefully illustrated that the “modern American military candidly acknowledges the critical link between minority officers and military readiness and effectiveness.”<sup>42</sup> This amicus brief, combined with current military services’ concepts of diversity, clearly reveals the current trend to connect a diverse force with

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<sup>36</sup> Lim, *Planning for Diversity*, 16.

<sup>37</sup> US Air Force, *US Air Force Plan for Integrating Diversity, 2004-2006*, (Washington DC, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, Air Force Diversity Statement, 27 March 2008

<sup>39</sup> *Amicus curiae* is a Latin term meaning “friend of the court.” An amicus curiae brief is a document regarding a case presented by someone who is not a direct party to the legal controversy. Individuals or groups with a special interest in the outcome of a case usually file an amicus curiae brief. The signatories filed the brief cited here in two cases involving the University of Michigan’s undergraduate and law school admission policies. In *Gratz v Bollinger*, the Supreme Court ruled that the university’s undergraduate admission policy that used race as a discriminator was unconstitutional. In *Grutter v Bollinger*, the US Supreme Court upheld the university’s law school admission policy that considered applicants’ race to a lesser degree.

<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Groner, “In ‘Grutter v. Bollinger’ Amicus Avalanche, One Brief Stood Out,” *Law.com*, 2 July 2003.

<sup>41</sup> Lt Gen Julius W. Becton, et al, amicus curiae brief in support of respondent, *Gratz v Bollinger*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Lt Gen Julius W. Becton, et al, amicus curiae brief in support of respondent, *Gratz v Bollinger*, 17.

increased mission effectiveness. Current organizational research, however, presents a more nuanced vision concerning diversity and increased effectiveness.

This research normally falls under the discipline known as organizational demography. One scholar explains: “the study of organizational demography provides a perspective on organizational events based upon such objective factors as the composition of the organization’s work force by age, tenure, race, or gender.”<sup>43</sup> In other words, organizational demography “addresses representation in terms of organizational outcomes.”<sup>44</sup> In an exhaustive literature review, researchers present evidence that both confirms the positive aspects of a diverse workforce while simultaneously illustrating significant negative aspects that are often overlooked in the drive toward a diverse workforce.<sup>45</sup>

Emphasizing the positive aspect, Catalyst, a research and advisory organization working to advance women in business, examined 353 Fortune 500 companies and concluded that there is a correlation between gender diversity and financial performance. Using Return on Equity (ROE) and Total Return to Shareholders (TRS) the report states, “the group of companies with the highest representation of women in their top management teams experienced better financial performances than the group of companies with the lowest women’s representation.”<sup>46</sup> In his study on diversity as a foreign policy asset, Michael Werz claims, “identifying, teaching, and leveraging cultural competence is not an idealist proposal, but falls squarely with the national interest.”<sup>47</sup> Focusing on the banking industry and the relationship between cultural diversity and business strategy, one researcher found that diversity adds value and, within the right context, “contributes to firm competitive advantage.”<sup>48</sup> In a more advanced study covering six years, scholars found that beyond moderate levels of diversity, there was a

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<sup>43</sup> Garth Coombs Jr., “Organizational Demography: Implications for the Organization Development Practitioner,” *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 10 (1992): 199-220.

<sup>44</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, 22.

<sup>45</sup> Martha Farnsworth Riche et al, *Literature Review: Empirical Evidence Supporting the Business-Case Approach to Workforce Diversity*, Center of Naval Analyses (CNA) Report D0011482.A2 (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Catalyst, *The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity*, (New York: Catalyst, 2004).

<sup>47</sup> Michael Werz, *Diversity as Foreign Policy Asset*, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (Washington DC, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> Orlando C. Richard, “Racial Diversity, Business Strategy, and Firm Performance: A Resource-Based View,” *Academy of Management Journal* 43, no. 2 (2000): 164-177.

positive effect of racial diversity on both short-term and long-term measures of performance. The study concluded by emphatically announcing, “it is those companies that proactively acknowledge, value, and exploit diversity that will profit most.”<sup>49</sup> Despite these promising findings, differentiating between causal links and simple correlation proves difficult. For example, do companies perform well as result of workforce diversity, good management, or a combination of both? Isolating diversity in an effort to determine causality in successful business practices is a challenge to any research endeavor in this area.

Not all research, however, points towards a positive relationship between diversity and improved performance. In fact, research often cites the negative effects of workforce diversity. Tsui and Gutek, scholars in the field of organizational demographics, present “consistent support for the negative effect of diversity on individuals and on relationships between individuals.”<sup>50</sup> Figure 2 below illustrates their findings on diversity at the individual level.<sup>51</sup>

Individual-Level Findings According to Diversity Dimension	
Diversity Dimension	Effect on Outcome
Gender	Increases absences Decreases psychological commitment Increases intent to leave Worsens social relations with senior-level and peer women
Race	Increases absences Decreases psychological commitment Increases intent to leave Decreases interpersonal communication
Age	Increases intent to leave the company
Company tenure	Increases turnover
Education level	Increases turnover

**Figure 2: Diversity Effects at the Individual Level**

Source: Anne S. Tsui and Barbara A. Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations: Current Research and Future Directions*. (New York: Lexington Books, 1999).

<sup>49</sup> Orlando C. Richard, B.P.S. Murthi, and Kiran Ismail, “The Impact of Racial Diversity on Intermediate and Long-Term Performance: The Moderating Role of Environmental Context,” *Strategic Management Journal* 28 (2007): 1213-1233.

<sup>50</sup> Anne S. Tsui and Barbara A. Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations: Current Research and Future Directions* (New York: Lexington Books, 1999).

<sup>51</sup> Tsui and Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations*, 169.

In a review spanning 40 years of research, Williams and O'Reilly find that increased diversity "typically has negative effects on social integration, communication, and conflict."<sup>52</sup> An increase in demographic diversity is felt more acutely among the dominant majority and often results in less interpersonal communication, poorer social relations, and lower psychological commitment to the organization.<sup>53</sup> In a five-year study on the effect of diversity on business performance, Kochan et al reported no correlation between diversity and effectiveness.<sup>54</sup> Ely and Meyerson succinctly capture the skeptics' view concerning diversity's relationship to improved performance – "There is no evidence that simply recognizing something as valuable will make it so."<sup>55</sup>

These sentiments do not necessarily devalue diversity. Empirical research simply illustrates that diversity is no panacea. In an exhaustive literature review, researchers found little evidence of diversity's direct impact on performance for three reasons: (1) a lack of theory on how diversity matters across groups and people who may not interact with each other; (2) a lack of data to tie diversity to standard corporate outcome; and (3) a lack of knowledge about how to handle the necessary number of variables effectively.<sup>56</sup> In a separate review spanning data from 1997 to 2005, researchers concluded that the effect of diversity on work group performance was simply inconclusive.<sup>57</sup> In the past, diversity proponents have proposed the possibility of an ideal amount of diversity – "a critical mass in a team – where diversity advantages, such as unique informational and skill resources may be maximized, and disadvantages, such as communication problems, may be minimized."<sup>58</sup> Empirical research does not support this notion. Most researchers believe diversity, regardless of degree of representation, can affect performance both

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<sup>52</sup> K.Y. Williams and C.A. O'Reilly, "Demography and Diversity in Organizations: A Review of 40 Years of Research," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 20 (1998): 77-140.

<sup>53</sup> Tsui and Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations*.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Kochan, Katerina Bezrukova, Robin Ely, et al, "The Effects of Diversity on Business Performance: Report of the Diversity Research Network," *Human Resource Management* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 3-21.

<sup>55</sup> Robin J. Ely and Debra E. Meyerson, "Theories of Gender in Organizations: A New Approach to Organizational Analysis and Change," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 22 (2000): 103-151.

<sup>56</sup> Riche et al, *Literature Review: Empirical Evidence Supporting the Business-Case Approach*, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Daan van Knippenberg and Michaela C. Schippers, "Work Group Diversity," *Annual Review of Psychology* 58 (2007): 515-541.

<sup>58</sup> Stephen B. Knouse and James B. Stewart, *Diversity Tool Kit*, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (2004).

negatively and positively.<sup>59</sup> In the end, diversity's relationship to mission effectiveness is context dependent – diversity can improve performance sometimes, in some places, for some things.<sup>60</sup>

In almost every situation, purposeful, robust diversity management practices enhance this context, creating fertile environments for organizations to reap the benefits of diversity. Figure 3 illustrates three levels of diversity management and practices supported by empirical research.<sup>61</sup>

Level	Diversity management practices
Individual	Facilitating employee ability to recognize different perspectives and see them as an opportunity for work-related learning
	Altering selection processes
Work group	Mentoring and networking for nontraditional employees
	Developing process management skills, e.g., negotiation and conflict management
	Facilitating effective communications
	Paying attention to diversity attributes, including status differentials, in composing groups, and/or designating roles within them
	Paying attention to the duration of the group's time together
	Instilling mission-specific or other team-specific identities
Organization	Making top management leadership and commitment visible, as in modeling appropriate behaviors
	Tailoring diversity management goals and practices to organizational goals and strategies
	Developing and maintaining an appropriate organizational culture, including an effective "language" for talking about diversity
	Emphasizing the organizational commonalities of diverse employees
	Addressing the diversity impact of organizational evaluation and reward systems

**Figure 3: Diversity Management Practices Supported by Empirical Research**

*Source: Tsui and Gutek, Demographic Differences in Organizations, 169*

Although researchers might disagree on the inherent or automatic relationship between diversity and performance, there is consensus on the importance of effectively managing diversity. At the 2007 DoD Diversity Summit, Roosevelt Thomas defined diversity management as “the craft or process of making quality decisions in the midst of differences, similarities, tensions, complexities, etc.”<sup>62</sup> According to Tsui and Gutek,

<sup>59</sup> Marilynn B. Brewer, “Managing Diversity: The Role of Social Identities.” In *Diversity in Work Teams: Research Paradigms for a Changing Workplace*, eds. Susan E. Jackson and Marian N. Ruderman (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> Riche et al, *Literature Review: Empirical Evidence Supporting the Business-Case Approach*, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Tsui and Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations*, 169.

<sup>62</sup> Roosevelt Thomas, 2007 DoD Diversity Summit, as quoted in Lim, *Planning for Diversity*, 20.

“diversity is a liability until and unless processes are in place to manage the negative dynamic and to release diversity’s hidden potential.”<sup>63</sup> Orlando Richard, cited earlier for his research on the positive impact of diversity on performance, admits that effectiveness is likely determined by “how organization leaders and participants respond to and manage diversity.”<sup>64</sup> In an extensive field research study, researchers found that instead of simply “looking for evidence that diversity per se is good or bad for business” – the essence of the business case argument – organizations should focus on the “conditions that either leverage or mitigate diversity.”<sup>65</sup> In almost every case, it is not diversity itself but a lack of diversity management that leads to negative performance outcomes.

### Conclusions

Definitions matter. They often serve as a shortcut to understanding and frame both individuals’ and organizations’ perception of issues. With an issue like diversity – by its nature distinctly personal – this foundational understanding is vital. For example, in a survey of government employees, 45 percent of white men and 18 to 28 percent of minorities and females viewed the term diversity as a code word for affirmative action.<sup>66</sup> An organization’s definition of diversity serves as the foundation upon which strategic planners construct diversity initiatives. From the inclusion of cognitive abilities and decision-making skills to understanding similarities, the definition influences all aspects of an organization’s diversity efforts. In today’s environment, a broad definition that combines both demographic diversity and the more abstract cognitive and cultural skills is beneficial. This broad perception allows for lawful compliance and quantifiable measurement in addition to purposefully recruiting and retaining a myriad of different skill-sets and cognitive talents.

Organizations can either reap the benefits or suffer the repercussions of these multiple skill-sets and talents. To some extent, organizations are justified – both empirically and emotionally – in the claim that diversity improves capability and mission effectiveness. This validation comes with an equally supported warning. Diversity is not

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<sup>63</sup> Tsui and Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations*, 143.

<sup>64</sup> Richard, “Racial Diversity, Business Strategy, and Firm Performance,” 174.

<sup>65</sup> Kochan, “The Effects of Diversity on Business Performance,” 32.

<sup>66</sup> Vidu Soni, “A Twenty-First Century Reception for Diversity in the Public Sector: A Case Study,” *Public Administration Review* 60 (2000): 395-408.

an automatic performance enhancer and any search for the optimal level of diversity is futile. If organizations heed this warning, carefully plan diversity initiatives, and focus on diversity management, diversity can indeed deliver on hopeful promises.

Moving from the general to the specific, Chapter Two will evaluate diversity within the US Air Force. The chapter presents detailed data on the demographic profile of the US Air Force and provides context with a wide span of comparisons, both internal and external to the US Air Force. By contrasting the USAF officer corps with other military services, the US population, and the USAF enlisted force, the chapter strives to evaluate US Air Force diversity. The chapter also specifically focuses on diversity in the general officer ranks. As seen in the introduction to this chapter, senior US Air Force leaders clearly believe in the value of diverse force. As a result, the following chapter compares this official US Air Force advocacy for a diverse force against actual force diversity.



## Chapter 2

### US Air Force Diversity: Current Situation

*The strength of the Air Force comes from our people – and in large measure from our diversity. We join together from all walks of life to collectively serve our Nation and its flag. Whether Regular, Reserve, Guard or Civilian, all of us take pride in our service, pledging that every action reflects our personal best...Across the Service, we represent a broad range of diverse missions, family situations, ethnicities, faiths, races, and educational backgrounds. Yet together, this rich tapestry forms the world's finest Air Force drawn from the best talent America has to offer.*

*- Michael B. Donley,  
Secretary of the Air Force*

While the previous chapter focused primarily on diversity in general, this chapter examines specific diversity characteristics within the United States Air Force. Over the last several years, USAF leaders have consistently labeled force diversity as a key component of organizational effectiveness and warfighting capability. In the official 2007 Air Force Approach to Diversity, Air Force leaders declared, “it is imperative that we leverage the diversity of our Airmen and of our Nation to achieve mission excellence and sustain dominance in air, space, and cyberspace.”<sup>1</sup> In both 2008 and 2009, the Secretary of the Air Force, through the official Air Force Diversity Statement, trumpeted the necessity of promoting and harnessing force diversity.<sup>2</sup> Through these official statements, US Air Force rhetoric has increasingly underscored an organizational belief in the value of a diverse force. As a result, this chapter serves several purposes. First, the chapter presents detailed data on US Air Force demographics. This thorough presentation aids in comparing the official US Air Force desire for diversity with actual force diversity. Second, the chapter compares US Air Force diversity with other military services and the civilian population. Third, research closely examines the level of

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Craig W. Duehring, Acting Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Air Force Approach to Diversity, memorandum, 15 October 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, Air Force Diversity Statement, 27 March 2008 and Michael B. Donley, Secretary of the Air Force, Letter to Airmen on Diversity, 17 February 2009.

diversity in the senior leader echelons. While Chapter Three will provide more analysis, this chapter's main objective is to present data and provide relevant context through proper comparison and contrast in order to answer the first portion of this work's overall research question – Does the US Air Force have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions?

### **Definitions and Data Characteristics**

Before embarking on a detailed data presentation, a brief examination of the US Air Force's official diversity definition is required to establish a baseline for measuring organizational diversity. Taken from the 2008 Air Force Diversity Statement, the US Air Force defines diversity as the “composite of individual characteristics, experiences and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission.”<sup>3</sup> Within the same document, the definition expands to include “personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical and spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity and gender.”<sup>4</sup> As detailed in Chapter One, the US Air Force definition offers a perfect example of the modern, expanded view of diversity and its connection to improved organizational performance. Unfortunately, the data presented here focuses almost exclusively on the traditional components of race, ethnicity, and gender. The cognitive abilities, personalities, and life experiences captured in the expanded definition are paramount in the effort to separate mission essential diversity from Equal Opportunity compliance. Quantifiable data in these areas, however, is scarce if not absent altogether. Chapter Three further examines these shortcomings.

Since most data available pertains to race and ethnicity, a brief explanation of these categories is helpful in understanding the data presented. In October 1997, the Office of Management and Budget announced revised standards for federal data on race and ethnicity. As a result, the following five categories for race emerged: White, Black or African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American

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<sup>3</sup> Wynne, Air Force Diversity Statement.

<sup>4</sup> Wynne, Air Force Diversity Statement.

Indian/Alaska Native.<sup>5</sup> Prior to this reclassification, Asians and Pacific Islanders were included in the same racial category. The new standards also allowed respondents to select more than one race when they self-identified. The new standards also established two categories for ethnicity – Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino.<sup>6</sup> To clarify the relationship between race and ethnicity, the reader should understand that Hispanics can be of any race. For example, of the 3,838 Black officers in the US Air Force, 72 also identified themselves as ethnic Hispanics.<sup>7</sup> The majority of data presented here hews to the five categories outlined above. Reports and research that do not ascribe to these categories are still extremely valuable, however, and should not be discounted due to technicalities. In their extensive report, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, Kraus and Riche use the following categories: White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and Asian/other.<sup>8</sup> Despite this combination of race and ethnicity, the data presented remains valuable and insightful. When data categories vary widely from examples presented here, the variance is noted.

In addition, this study purposefully focuses on the officer corps. Although the research occasionally highlights the enlisted force and its diversity for comparison purposes, the brunt of the data and analysis is concentrated on the officer corps for several reasons. First, if diversity and mission performance are linked in certain situations, it is appropriate to focus on diversity at the senior, strategic decision-making levels. Therefore, the data presented focuses on the officer corps in general and general officers in particular. Second, officers traditionally serve as spokesmen for the US military. From Generals Norman Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell during Desert Storm to Generals Tommy Franks and Vincent Brooks during Operation Iraqi Freedom, officers generally represent the US armed forces to the American public. As a result, diversity in

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<sup>5</sup> The terms Black and African American are used interchangeably from this point forward. Information on race and ethnic categories can be found at US Census Bureau, Racial and Ethnic Classification Used in Census 2000 and Beyond, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/racefactcb.html> (accessed 29 March 2009).

<sup>6</sup> The terms Hispanic and Non-Hispanic are used from this point forward.

<sup>7</sup> FY 08 Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Demographic Profile of DoD and US Coast Guard. Broken down by military service and rank, the DEOMI product is a fantastic source for race, ethnicity, and gender representation across the Department of Defense. The majority of data presented in this chapter is drawn from DEOMI's product. See DEOMI's website for more information and publications, <http://www.deomi.org/> (accessed 10 May 09).

<sup>8</sup> Amanda Kraus and Martha Farnsworth Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, Center of Naval Analyses (CNA) Report D0013197.A2 (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2006).

the officer corps is an essential component to the access and legitimacy argument presented in Chapter One. Finally, the officer corps has traditionally been less diverse than the enlisted force. This imbalance has historically damaged the relationship between superiors and subordinates and renders analysis of the officer corps and its diversity even more vital.<sup>9</sup> Let there be no doubt – the strong enlisted force of the US armed forces is the vital backbone of any military operation. In an effort to bound and focus this research, however, the emphasis for this study will remain on the officer corps.

### **Air Force Diversity: Behind the Numbers**

At the end of FY 2008, the US Air Force officer corps strength stood at 64,805. To gain perspective, Table 2 presents officer strength for the Department of Defense and military services at the conclusion of FY 08.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 2: DoD and Military Services Officer Corps Strength**

DoD Total	205,765
US Army	72,928
US Air Force	64,805
US Navy	49,735
Marine Corp	18,297

*Source: FY 08 Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Demographic Profile of DoD*

To put the officer corps in perspective, with regards to size, consider that the DoD enlisted force numbered 1,163,669 at the conclusion of FY 2008.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the officer corps accounts for about 18 percent of US military strength. Despite its relatively small proportion, the US military officer corps, and US Air Force officers in particular, present an intriguing case-study in modern diversity.

### **Race**

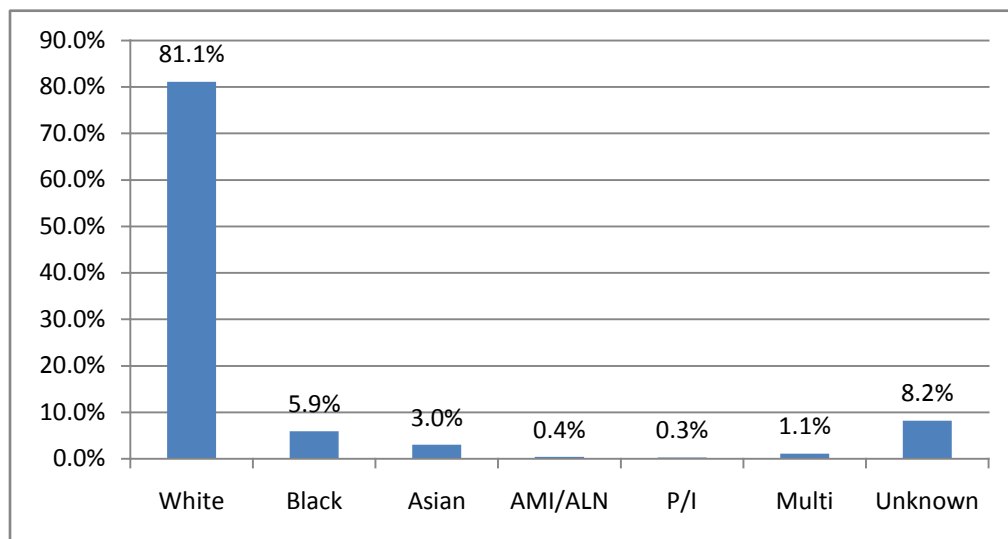
Figure 4 illustrates the racial representation within the US Air Force. The raw numbers behind these percentages are as follows: White (52,556), Black (3,838), Asian

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter One, page 7, for a discussion on the damaging diversity imbalance between the officer and enlisted corps during the Vietnam War.

<sup>10</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.

<sup>11</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.

(1,923), AMI/ALN (255), P/I (184), Multi (714), and Unknown (5,335). Two components of this statistical breakdown are readily apparent. First, the officer corps is predominantly white. Second, the category “Unknown” outnumbers any single minority group and nearly exceeds the minority total, both in percentage and total numbers. These unknown variants are most commonly the result of individual service-members declining to respond to race/ethnicity questions. This number of non-respondents makes precise diversity examination more difficult. For example, if the majority of officers in the Unknown category were minorities, officer corps diversity improves dramatically, especially when compared to other military services. Conversely, if the Unknown category is predominantly White, the officer corps is even less diverse than current data indicates. Comparisons with other military services and the US population are still viable as the unknown variants exist across the Department of Defense and civilian sector. In the end, there is not a feasible method available to uncover the demographics hidden behind the Unknown category.



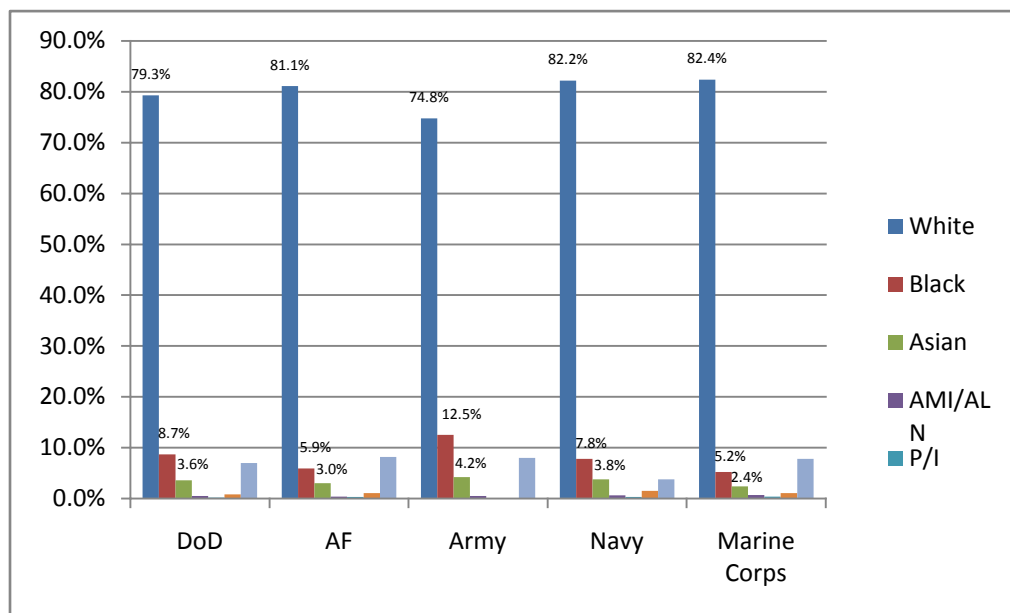
**Figure 4: Air Force Officer Representation - FY 08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

These Air Force statistics are merely interesting tidbits until given relevance through comparison and context. To that end, this chapter strives to move beyond simple presentation and provide context with a wide span of comparisons, both internal and external to the US Air Force. First, the research details the racial demographics of the officer corps within the entire Department of Defense and each military service. Moving

to ethnicity, the data details Air Force Hispanic representation among its officer corps as compared to other services and the Department of Defense. The research also provides a breakdown of gender representation amongst the military services. This section also compares US Air Force officer corps demographics with the appropriate sector of the US population. Additionally, the analysis compares representation among USAF officers and enlisted Airmen with special emphasis given to representation along gender lines.

Beginning with racial representation within the officer corps, Figure 5 provides the demographic breakdown among the Department of Defense and military services.<sup>12</sup> Again, the data portrays an officer corps that is predominantly white – ranging from 82.4 percent for the Marine Corps to 74.8 percent for the US Army. Similar to the US Air Force, the category Unknown accounts for 7 percent of the individuals throughout the Department of Defense. The US Army has the highest representation of Black officers (12.5 percent) and Asian officers (4.2 percent). The Marine Corps, as far as race, is the least diverse with only 5.2 percent Black officers and 2.4 percent Asian officers. The US Air Force has the lowest representation of Black (5.9%), Asian (3.0%), and AMI/ALN (.4%) when compared to the Army, Navy, and Department of Defense average.



**Figure 5: DoD Officer Representation - FY 08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

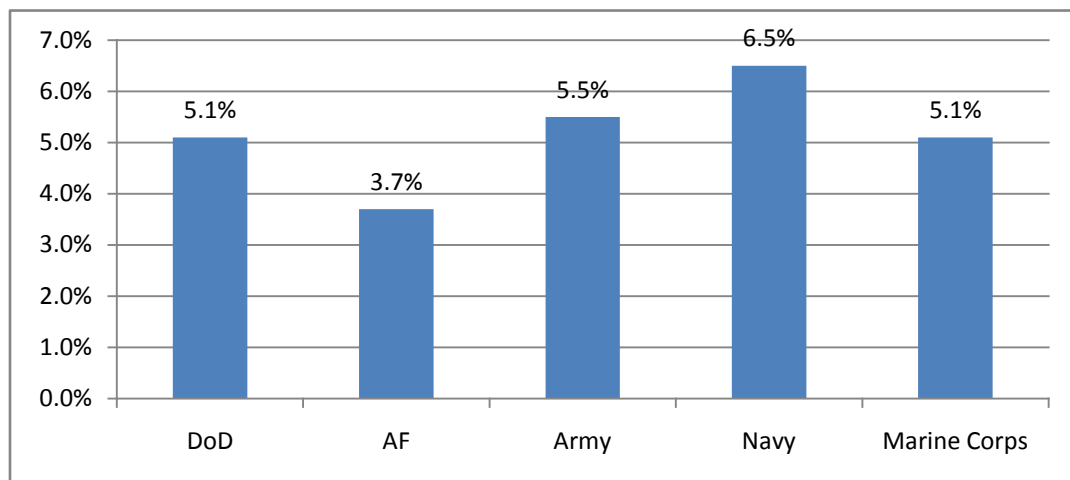
This data supports the conclusion that the US Air Force officer corps is less racially

<sup>12</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.

diverse than both the Department of Defense on average and all military services, except the Marine Corps.

## Ethnicity

Figure 6 highlights the ethnic representation among the officer corps in the Department of Defense and individual military services.<sup>13</sup> Once again, the US Air Force (3.7%) falls below the Department of Defense average (5.1%). In the case of ethnicity, the US Air Force also trails every military service. The US Navy is the most ethnically diverse service with an Hispanic officer representation of 6.5 percent. Although not presented here in graph format, Hispanics make up only 5.5 percent of the US Air Force enlisted force compared to the Army (11.9%), Navy (16%), Marine Corps (13.1%), and the Department of Defense average (11.6%). Hispanic representation is perhaps the most glaring weakness in the US Air Force's desire to field a diverse force. Although diversity



**Figure 6: DoD Officer Hispanic Representation - FY 08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

is not a competition among services, the fact that US Air Force Hispanic representation, both in the officer and enlisted ranks, is significantly below the DoD average and every other military service is troublesome for a service keen on emphasizing the value of a diverse force.

<sup>13</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.

## Gender

Gender representation has traditionally been both problematic and unique among the military services due to the political and legal sensitivity of women serving in combat roles. Following World War II, Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 which limited women's participation in the military to 2 percent of the total force.<sup>14</sup> Congress did not lift the ban until 1973. Since then, female representation in the US military has risen steadily: 1.6 percent in 1973, 8.5 percent in 1980, and 13.1 percent in 1996.<sup>15</sup> Until the 1990's, the Department of Defense's Combat Exclusion Policy prohibited women from serving in combat or combat support units.<sup>16</sup> Following Desert Storm, Congress repealed the restrictions and allowed individual services to establish policy on women in combat roles. Despite the Army and Marine Corps' decision to restrict women from serving in combat arms branches (infantry, artillery, armor, and air cavalry), the 1990's was an instrumental decade for women and their role in the military. Table 3 illustrates the services' expansion of women's role in combat during the 1990's.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 3: Percentage of Total Positions Open to Women in All Services**

Service	1991	1996
US Air Force	97%	99%
Army	52%	91%
Navy	59%	97%
Marine Corps	33%	62%

*Source: Rosemarie Skaine, Women at War: Gender Issues of Americans in Combat*

Despite the expansion of women's role in the military, female representation has rarely risen above 20 percent of the Department of Defense officer corps. Figure 7 below outlines the current female officer representation across the Department of Defense.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Rosemarie Skaine, *Women at War: Gender Issues Of Americans in Combat* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc, 1999), 58.

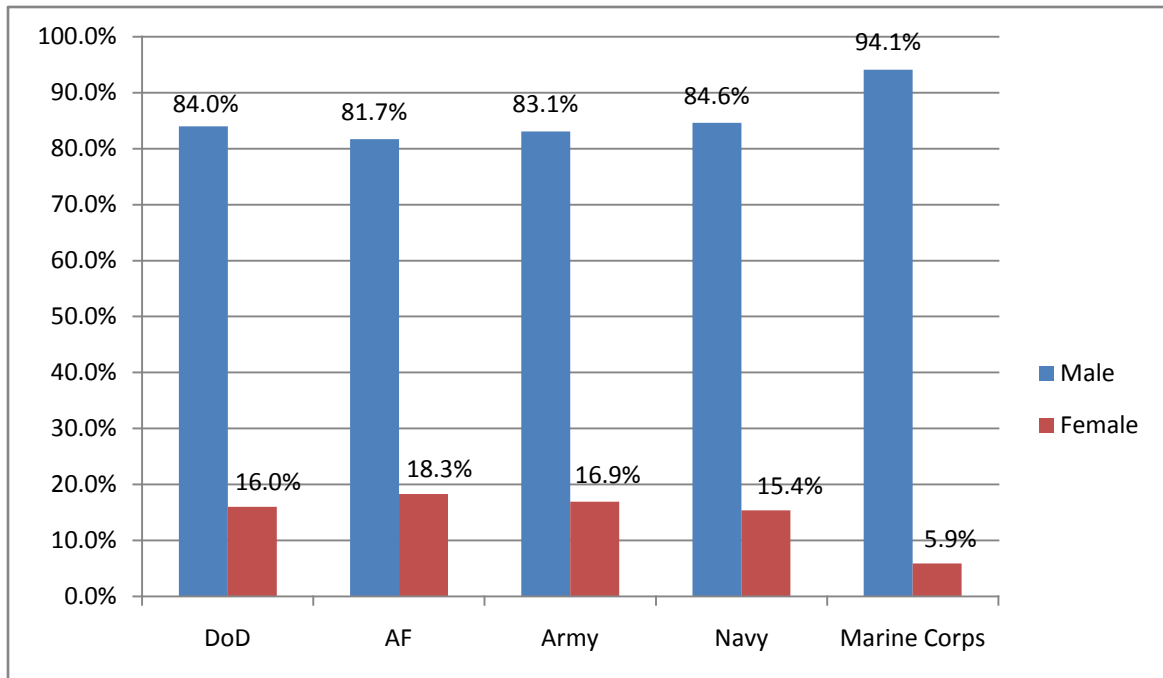
<sup>15</sup> Women's Research and Education Institute, "Women in the Military: Where They Stand," in *American Military Women at War*, ed. Kathryn Sheldon, (Washington, DC: WIMSA, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> Kristal Alfonso, "Femme Fatale: An Examination of the Role of Women in Combat and the Policy Implications for Future American Military Operations" (master's thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, June 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Rosemarie Skaine, *Women at War*, 37.

<sup>18</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.





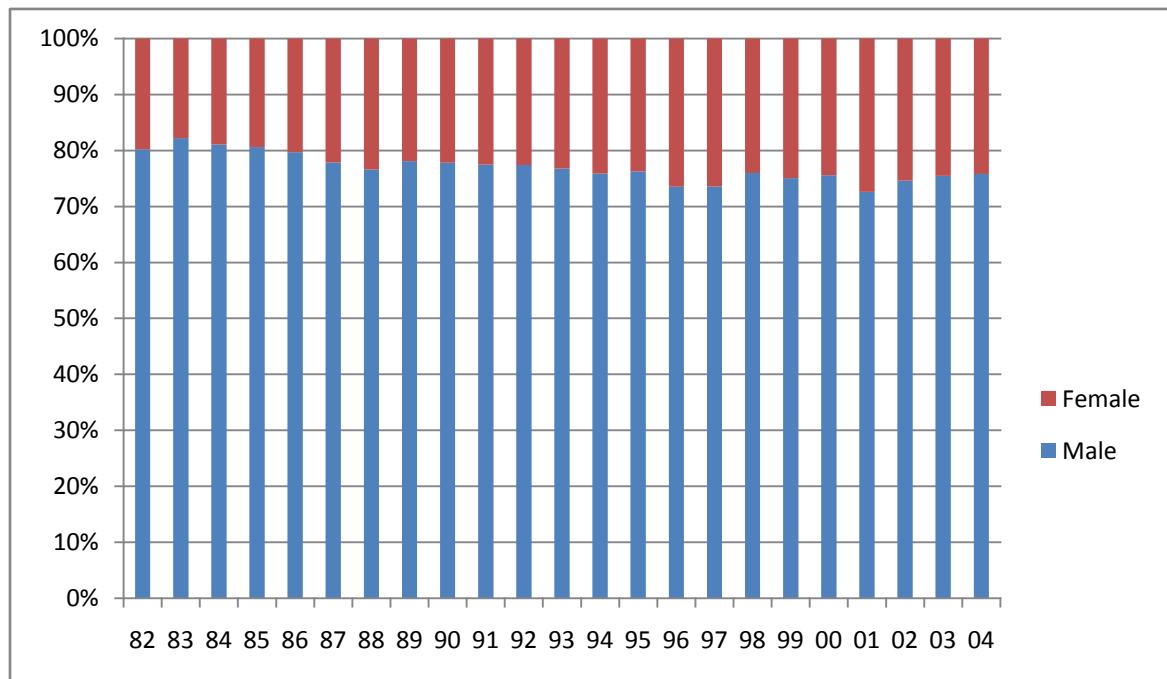
**Figure 7: DoD Officer Gender Representation - FY 08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

In this case, the US Air Force representation exceeds that of the military services and Department of Defense average. Despite this comparative success, there are two primary caveats that temper USAF gains in this area. First, as illustrated in Table 3, the US Air Force has the highest percentage of total positions open to women. By opening up fighter and bomber aircraft to women in the 1990's, the US Air Force eliminated almost all positions that might be included in an US Air Force combat exclusion policy. Today, only a small portion of USAF Special Operations specialties are restricted to males. As a result, it is somewhat expected that female representation in the US Air Force would exceed other military services. Second, the US Air Force has always had a healthy representation of females when compared to the other services. This comparative success conceals an apparent stagnation in ensuring adequate female representation. Consider Figure 8, which illustrates the gender profile of officer accession since FY 1982.<sup>19</sup> Figure 8 highlights an Air Force success story to some extent. Over the last quarter of a century, the US Air Force has successfully ensured females represent approximately 20 percent of its officer corps. This success also spurs another less promising question – why has the

<sup>19</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, 56.

US Air Force been unable to expand significantly beyond 20 percent and improve on its past success with female representation? This question is even more poignant when one considers that the US Air Force has more positions open to women than any other service. Chapter Three evaluates this stagnation and further analyzes women's role in the twenty-first century US Air Force.



**Figure 8: Gender Profile of US Air Force Officer Accessions, FY 1982-2004**

*Source: Kraus and Riche, Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*

## Population Representation

As detailed in Chapter One, the concept of the US military sufficiently representing the population it serves has a long history. The entire access and legitimacy argument centers on an armed forces population that closely mirrors the general population. By resembling the public it serves, the military is more likely to gain legitimacy, and therefore public support, during times of conflict. This shared relationship between a diverse military and diverse population also improves recruiting opportunities by ensuring access to all demographics. Accusations of minority overrepresentation, or cannon fodder arguments, dogged the US military during Vietnam

and Desert Storm.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the US military as representative of the overall US population remains an important issue today. Every year the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness releases an exhaustive report entitled “Population Representation in the Military Services.”<sup>21</sup> The latest installment, the FY 2007 report, contains hundreds of graphics all designed to illustrate the relationship between the nation’s military force and its population. In the end, however, the theory of adequate representation remains a complicated issue. After all, the US military has certain restrictions – age, mental and physical standards, sexual preference, etc – that ensure the armed forces will never achieve a pure representation of the general population.

As a result of these restrictions, researchers often filter the general population data in order to better gauge US military representation. Even these efforts become convoluted. Consider Table 4, which outlines three different studies and approaches to comparing the US military to the general public.

**Table 4: Approaches to US Military Population Representation**

Study	Filter
Defense Business Board Report on Increasing Diversity in DoD’s Flag and Senior Executive Ranks <sup>22</sup>	US Males, College Educated, Ages 18-44
FY 07 Population Representation of the Military Services <sup>23</sup>	College Graduates in the Civilian Workforce, Ages 21-49
Kraus and Riche’s <i>Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity</i> <sup>24</sup>	College Educated, Labor Force Participation, Ages 22-54, US Citizenship

These discrepancies are more than mere technicalities. Depending on the filter used, representation data can shift quite dramatically. The Defense Business Board study on representation in the senior leader echelons focuses exclusively on US males and claims

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter One, pages 6-7, for a detailed discussion of the overrepresentation issue during Vietnam and Desert Storm.

<sup>21</sup> The latest installment, FY 2007, is located at <http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/PopRep2007/contents/contents.html> (accessed 2 April 09).

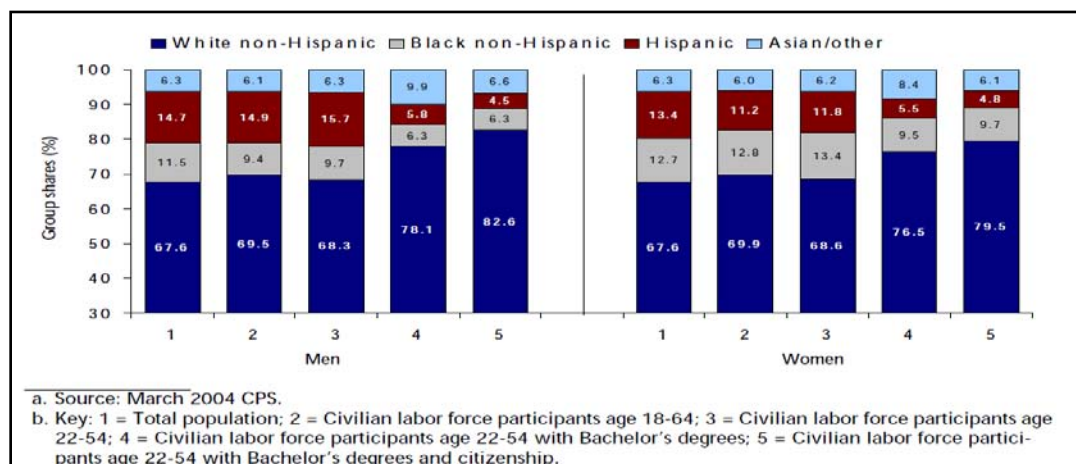
<sup>22</sup> Defense Business Board, *Task Group on Increasing Diversity in DoD’s Flag and Senior Executive Ranks*, Report FY03-9 (Washington, DC: Defense Business Board, March 2004), 2.

<sup>23</sup> Office of the Under Secretary for Defense, Personnel and Readiness, FY 2007 Population Representation in the Military Services, Table B-52.

<sup>24</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, 34.

that citizenship requirements do not affect conclusions drawn in the analysis. Kraus and Riche demonstrate, however, that the citizenship requirements for officers do indeed affect minority representation.<sup>25</sup> The ultimate goal is to create a valid comparison between the US population and US military. In other words, for any population representation study to have merit, researchers must create an ‘apples to apples’ comparison. The officer corps’ age bracket, education level, and citizenship requirements all distinctly affect the aspect of society that it most resembles.

For the purposes of this study, the author has chosen Kraus and Riche’s model for comparison between the US Air Force officer corps and the US population. Figure 9 illustrates their analysis.<sup>26</sup> Kraus and Riche’s model serves as an excellent analysis tool for several reasons. First, their age group, 22-54, captures 99 percent of US Air Force officers. Second, their successive filter construct clearly illustrates the changing nature of US population segments. Following Figure 9 from left to right, the filter includes participation in the labor force, age, education, and citizenship. Column One represents the entire US population per the 2004 Current Population Survey, a monthly product from the US Census Bureau. Column Two filters this data to illustrate different demographics’ participation in the civilian labor force. Column Three filters the labor force participation by age. The fourth successive filter accounts for education



**Figure 9: Finding the Right Comparison Group for US Air Force Officers**

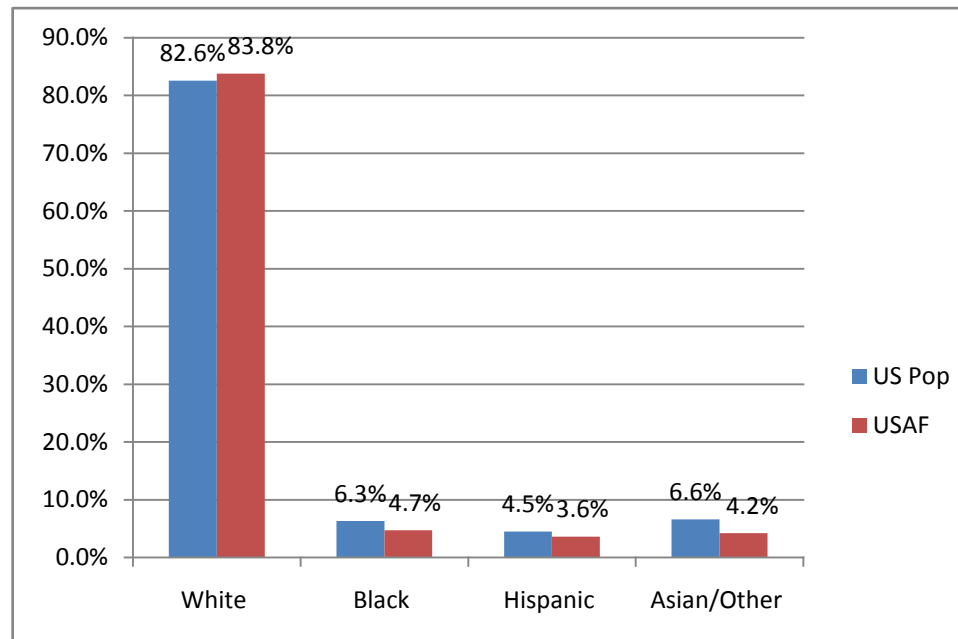
Source: Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*

<sup>25</sup> For example, White population representation rises significantly (78.1% to 82.6%) with the addition of citizenship requirements while the Hispanic representation drops (5.8% to 4.5%).

<sup>26</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, 34.

requirements by adding a four-year bachelor degree while the fifth column adds another dimension – US citizenship. As a result, the reader is able to view the changing dynamics of the US population through the lens of labor force participation, age, education, and citizenship. The model also accounts for gender differences. For example, Black females are more likely to meet the requirements for military officers than their Black male cohorts.

Using this detailed model, one is able to compare the US Air Force officer corps to the US population by simply placing Kraus and Riche’s final demographic breakdown (Column 5 from Figure 9) alongside the current officer demographics for both males and females. Figure 10 presents the subsequent comparison between US Air Force male officers and US males.<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 10: US Population and US Air Force Officers (Male)**

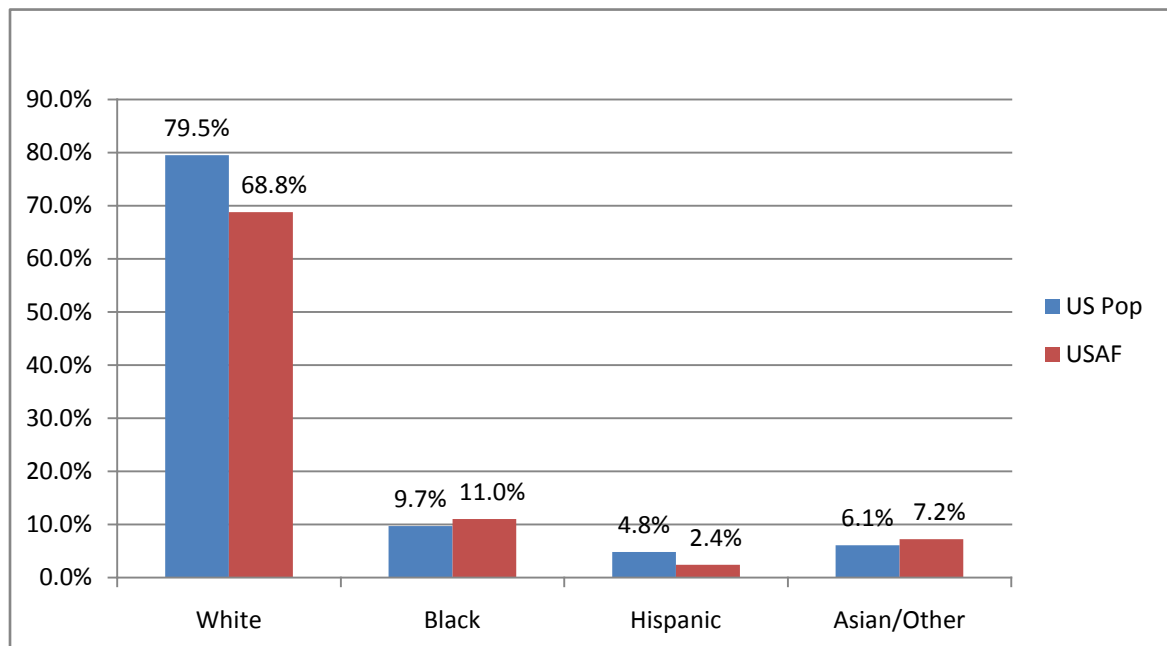
*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD and Kraus and Riche, Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*

As mentioned previously, Kraus and Riche’s model combines race and ethnicity. In the end, this mixture does not detract from data analysis. The White and Black racial categories, along with the Hispanic ethnicity category, align with the categories used previously in this project. For this presentation, Kraus and Riche’s “Asian/Other”

<sup>27</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, 34 and FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.

category is compared against the combined categories used in earlier data presentations: Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander. The data reveals an US Air Force male officer corps that is overrepresented by whites and underrepresented among all racial and ethnic groups when compared to the appropriate sector of the US population.

US Air Force female officer demographics, however, reflect another situation altogether when compared to the US population. Figure 11 presents the comparison data, once again using Kraus and Riche’s general population data from Figure 9.<sup>28</sup>



**Figure 11: US Population and US Air Force Officers (Female)**

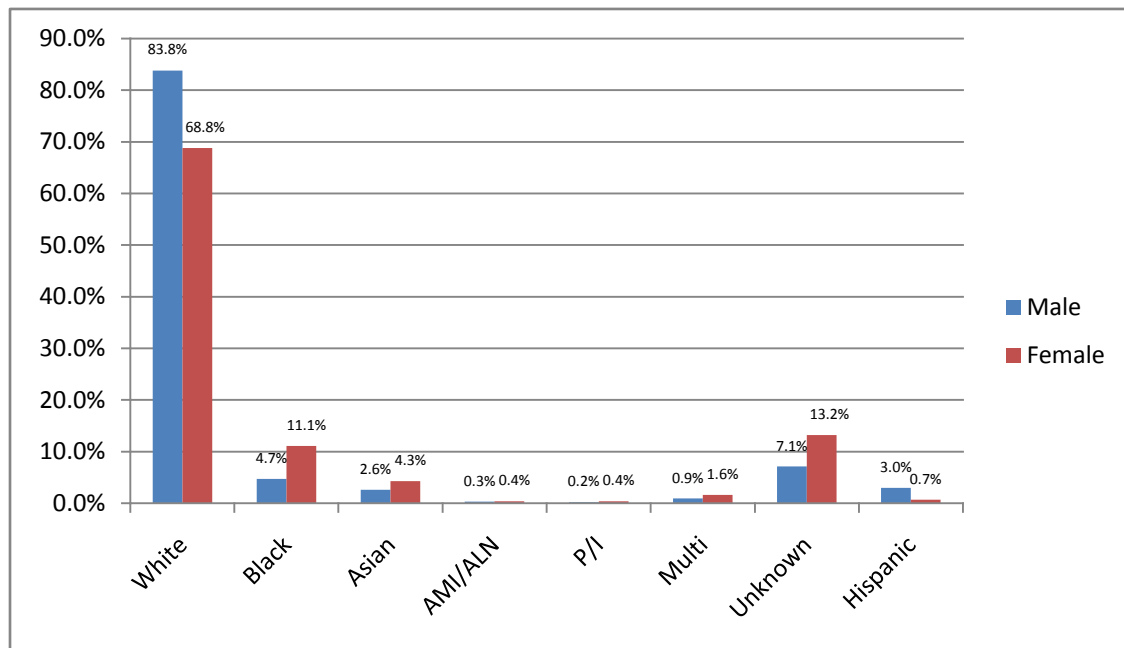
*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD and Kraus and Riche, Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*

The female officer corps is less White than the US population and has a greater proportion of Blacks and Asians/Others. Only in the area of ethnic Hispanics do female officers fall short in the population comparison. This data supports the conclusion that the female officer corps is more diverse male officers.

Moving away from the population comparison, the divergence between male and female diversity in the officer corps is even more apparent when the two groups are compared directly. Figure 12 illustrates the striking differences between male and female

<sup>28</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, 34 and FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.

officers in the US Air Force.<sup>29</sup> Female officers are almost three times more likely to be Black (11.1 percent versus 4.7 percent) and twice as likely to be Asian (4.3 percent versus 2.6 percent). Male officers (83.8%) are significantly more White than female offices (68.8%). Only in the area of ethnicity do male officers indicate a higher level of diversity.



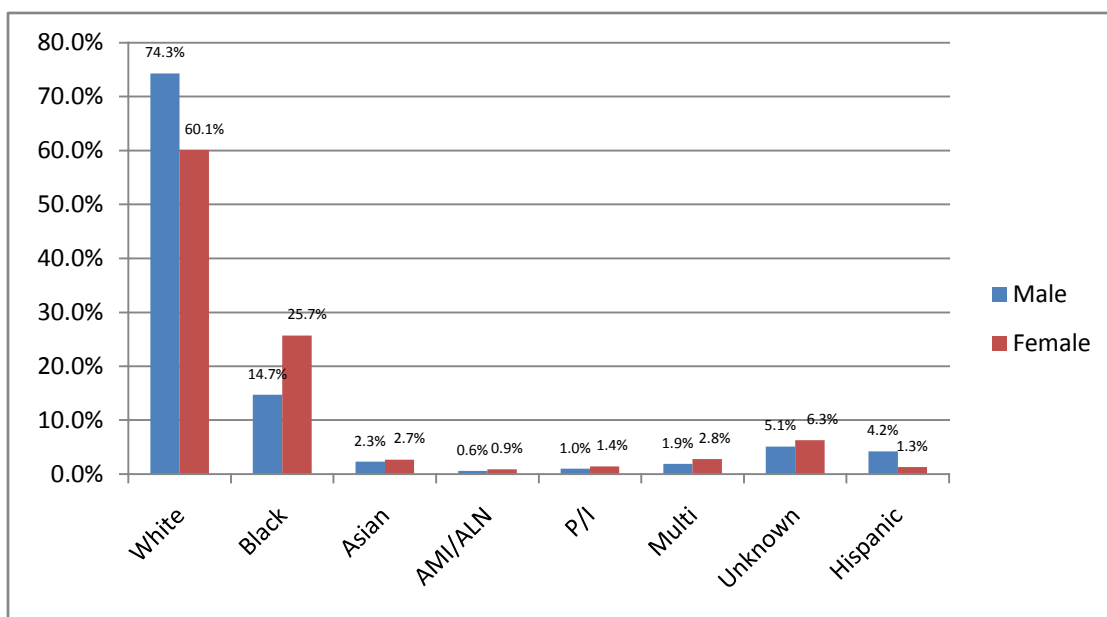
**Figure 12: AF Officer Demographics By Gender - FY 08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

In the enlisted corps, the divergence is even more striking. Figure 13 highlights the gender/diversity relationship within the enlisted corps.<sup>30</sup> Over 25 percent of female enlisted Airmen are Black – a surprising statistic when one considers that less than 5 percent of male officers are Black. As with the officer corps, female enlisted Airmen are more racially diverse across the board, the only exception once again being ethnicity. This data inspires another question – why are female Airmen more diverse than male Airmen, both in the officer and enlisted corps? By expanding female representation, the US Air Force might also improve overall diversity. In the past, however, the US Air Force has been unable to expand beyond 20 percent female representation (see Figure 8). Chapter Three further evaluates these issues and seeks to uncover why female Airmen are

<sup>29</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.

<sup>30</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.



**Figure 13: AF Enlisted Demographics By Gender - FY08**

*Source: FY 08 Defense DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

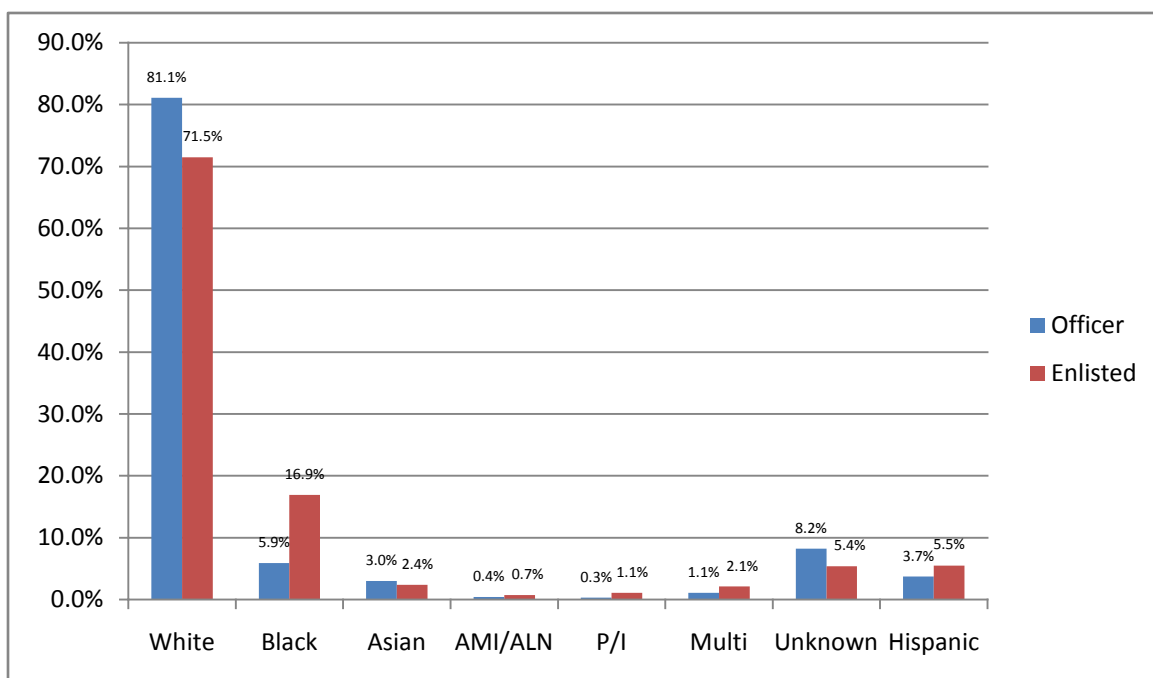
more diverse than their male cohorts.

In addition to the gender discrepancy, the overall officer and enlisted diversity imbalance raises important issues. During the Vietnam era, military officials realized the damaging repercussions when a diversity imbalance poisoned the relationship between superiors and subordinates.<sup>31</sup> Figure 14 highlights the diversity imbalance between the US Air Force officer and enlisted force.<sup>32</sup> Enlisted Airmen are almost three times more likely to be Black than their officer leaders. The officer corps is significantly more White (81.1%) than the enlisted force (71.5%). The enlisted force is also twice as likely to be ethnic Hispanic as US Air Force officers. Figures 11-14 indicate rich diversity is indeed present in the both the enlisted force and the female officer corps. If the US Air Force wishes to expand its diversity in other areas, it must analyze these segments for strategies that are transferable to less diverse areas – the male officer corps for example. Chapter Three will further evaluate these issues.

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter One, page 7, for a detailed discussion on past diversity imbalances between the officer and enlisted corps.

<sup>32</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD





**Figure 14: AF Officer and Enlisted Comparison - FY 08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

## General Officers

Diversity in the senior leader echelons has been an area of increasing concern in the US military. In 2004, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Assistant Secretaries for Manpower and Reserve Affairs of each service tasked the Defense Business Board to analyze the scarcity of minorities in the senior leader levels and recommend strategies for improvement.<sup>33</sup> In 2005, the Defense Human Resources Board lamented the lack of diversity in the flag officer ranks.<sup>34</sup> In October 2007, the Congressional Black Caucus met with Mr. Gordon England, Deputy Secretary of Defense, the US Army and US Air Force Chief of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, and Commandant of the Marine Corps to discuss the lack of diversity in the senior ranks.<sup>35</sup>

Diversity in the senior ranks is a unique and important issue for several reasons.

<sup>33</sup> Defense Business Board, *Task Group on Increasing Diversity*.

<sup>34</sup> Nelson Lim, Michelle Cho, and Kimberly Curry, *Planning for Diversity: Options and Recommendations for DoD Leaders*, RAND Report MG-743 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), xi.

<sup>35</sup> Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson's official website, "Congresswoman Johnson and CBC Meet With Top Military Officials to Discuss Increasing Diversity in the US Military's Senior Officer Ranks," [http://www.house.gov/list/press/tx30\\_johnson/Military\\_Diversity.html](http://www.house.gov/list/press/tx30_johnson/Military_Diversity.html) (accessed 2 Apr 09).

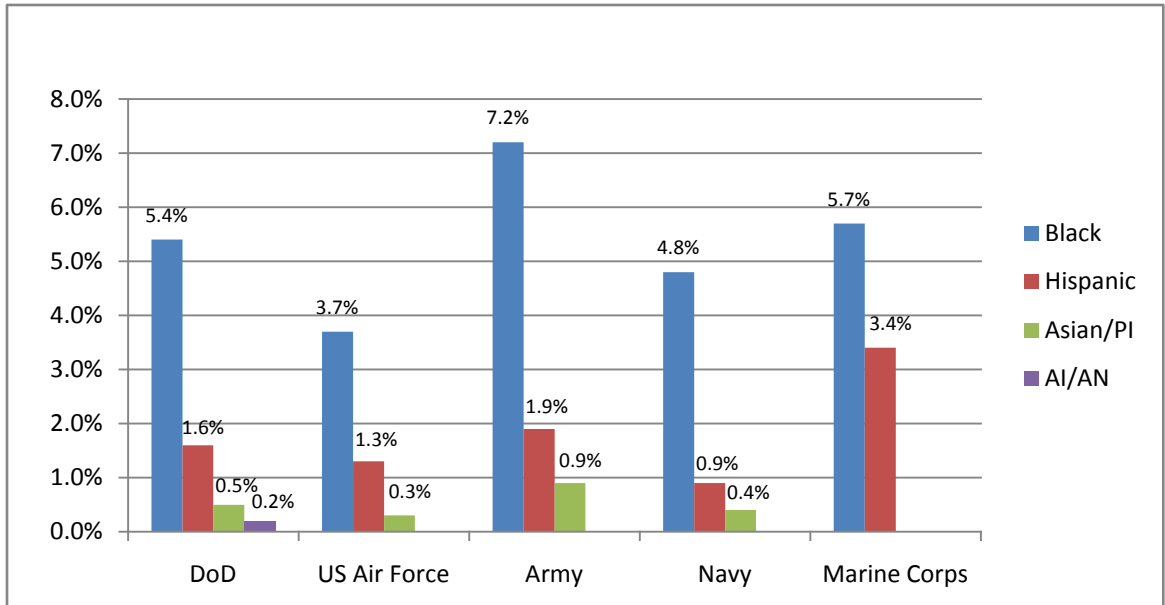
First, senior military leaders often represent the US Military in the public forum. A lack of diversity in these ranks increases the risk that the US public will perceive the US military as the exclusive domain of White males. Second, a diverse general officer corps provides invaluable benefits in the realms of mentorship and recruiting. In a recent US Air Force video on diversity, Brigadier General Ronnie Hawkins admits seeing an African American general officer convinced him at an early stage in his career that there was “room and value for me.”<sup>36</sup> Diversity in the senior ranks shatters the perceived glass ceiling. Third, senior leaders establish an organization’s strategic direction and influence strategic plans. Therefore, if diversity and organizational performance are linked, ensuring diversity at these strategic echelons is essential. Finally, as Chapter One detailed, proper diversity management is key to reaping the benefits of a diverse force. A diverse general officer corps is more likely to appreciate diversity and seek to reap its benefits. This section will describe the current level of diversity within the senior ranks. Chapter Three will help analyze this current representation and suggest ways to improve senior leader diversity in the future.

For the purposes of this project, the term senior leader or general officer applies to the flag officer ranks of each service, O-7 (one-star) through O-10 (four-star). Figure 15 details the current representation in the general officer ranks for each military service.<sup>37</sup> For this presentation, ethnicity is included alongside race. In addition, the data combines the Asian and Pacific Islander categories. As with overall officer representation, the US Air Force trails the DoD average, US Army, US Navy, and Marine Corps across almost all racial and ethnic demographics in the general officer ranks. This data supports the conclusion that US Air Force general officers are less racially and ethnically diverse than both the Department of Defense average and all military services. Chapter Three further analyzes the causes of these divergences.

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<sup>36</sup> Officials in the Air Force Equal Opportunity Office and the Strategic Diversity Integration Office released the diversity video that features senior AF leaders in March of 2009. The video can be accessed at <http://www.af.mil/tv/index.asp?showid=6970> (accessed 2 April 09).

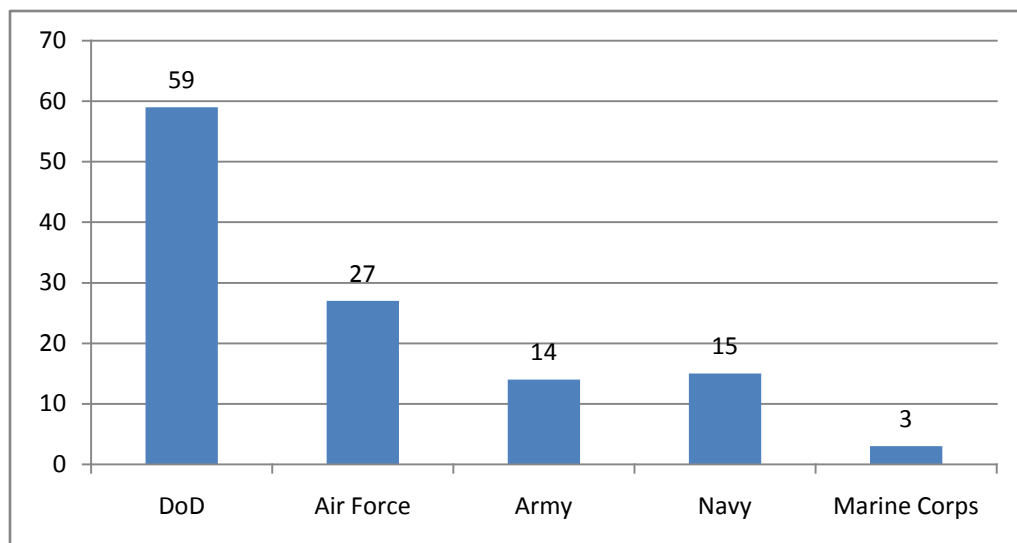
<sup>37</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.



**Figure 15: DoD Flag Officer Representation - FY 08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

As with the overall officer corps, gender representation within the general officer ranks illustrates a more promising situation for the US Air Force. Figure 16 captures the number of female general officers within the Department of Defense and each military service.<sup>38</sup>



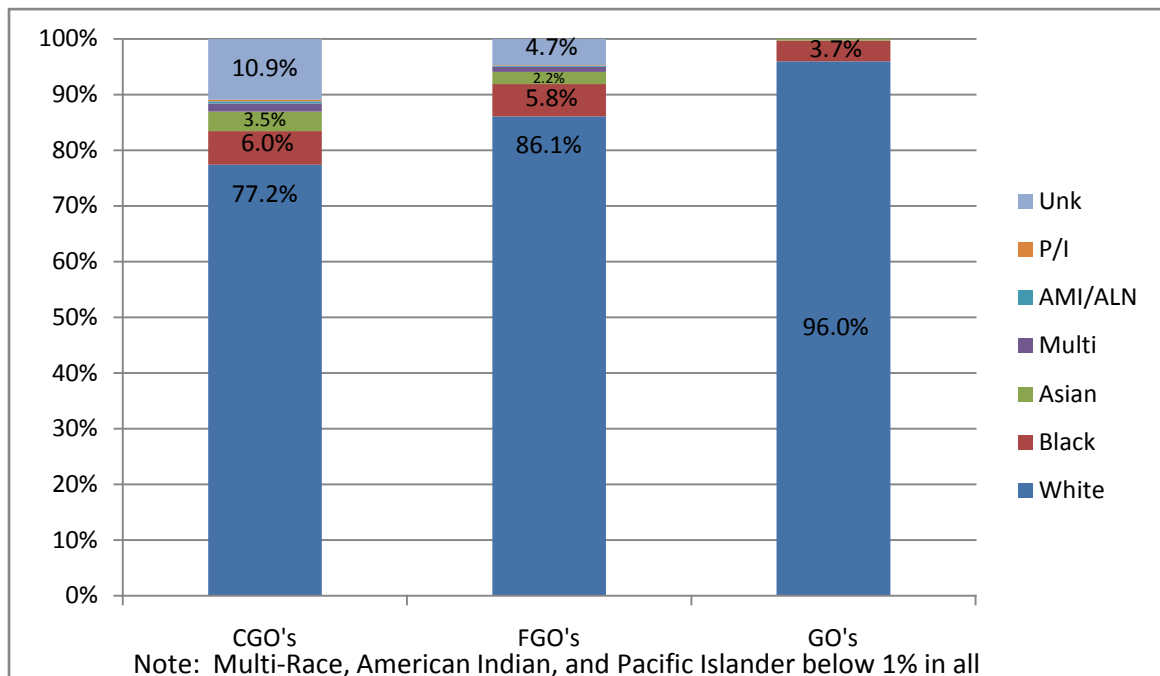
**Figure 16: Female General Officers in DoD - FY08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

<sup>38</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD.

US Air Force female senior leaders account for nearly 46 percent of all Department of Defense female generals. The 27 US Air Force female generals are nearly double the number of any other military service. The US Army, however, is the only service with a serving four-star female. General Ann Dunwoody commands the US Army Material Command and is the first and only female to achieve four-star rank in the US military. Interestingly, 53 of the 59 female flag officers are either one-star or two-star generals/admirals – 90% of the total. Although females have cracked the general officer glass ceiling, achieving three or four-star rank is still a male-dominated feat.

While Chapter Three will introduce the concept in detail, it is worth noting here that the US Air Force personnel pipeline is a closed system. In other words, the US military promotes senior leaders from within the current force – or pipeline – with no outside hiring capability. As a result, it is important to examine the current representation in the US Air Force personnel pipeline. Today's Company Grade and Field Grade Officers (CGOs/FGOs) will become tomorrow's general officers. In fact, younger officers' diversity has almost certainly established the boundaries for diversity in tomorrow's senior leaders.



**Figure 17: US Air Force Representation - CGO/FGO/GO - FY 08**

*Source: FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD*

Figure 17 illustrates diversity among the rank structure in the US Air Force.<sup>39</sup> The results are striking for several reasons. The younger Company Grade Officers are dramatically more diverse than their senior leaders. Younger officers are less White (77.2 percent versus 96 percent), more likely to be Black (6 percent versus 3.7 percent), and more likely to be Asian (3.5 percent versus .3 percent). An oddity perhaps is the number of young officers (10.9 percent) that refused to respond to race/ethnicity questions. This percentage is significantly higher than mid or senior level officers. This trend is worth future research as it might reveal a generational perspective on race and ethnicity. The mid-level officers are less diverse than their younger officers but are still more diverse than general officers. Current general officers are overwhelmingly White – all but 12 of the 293 are Caucasian.

Some may view this data as promising. While current senior leaders are an extremely homogenous group, the younger officer corps is more diverse. Diversity in today's young officers, however, does not guarantee future representation in the senior leader echelons. It only implies the possibility of increased diversity. Unless the organization focuses on proper retention and fair promotion, tomorrow's senior leaders could still resemble today's. Chapter Three covers the personnel closed system in greater detail, including the role of diversity in retention and promotion.

## **Conclusions**

The overall purpose of this chapter was to answer the first portion of this work's overall research question – Does the US Air Force have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions? To that end, the chapter presented data and provided relevant context through proper comparison and contrast – both internal and external to the US Air Force. As a result, the data supports the following conclusions. The US Air Force officer corps is less racially diverse than the Department of Defense average, the US Army, and the US Navy. Only the Marine Corps is less racially diverse. The US Air Force officer and enlisted force is also significantly less ethnically diverse than the Department of Defense average and all military services. When compared to the

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<sup>39</sup> FY 08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD. CGO/FGO/GO are acronyms for Company Grade Officers (2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant – Captain), Field Grade Officers (Major – Colonel), and General Officers (Brigadier General – General).

appropriate US population sector, US Air Force male officers are less diverse than the comparable civilian population. In addition, US Air Force general officers are less racially and ethnically diverse than both the Department of Defense average and all military services. Based on these conclusions, the US Air Force does not have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions.

Despite these shortcomings, the US Air Force does compare favorably in some areas, particularly with regards to gender representation. The US Air Force officer corps has more female representation than the Department of Defense average and all other military services. Female officers are more racially diverse than both their civilian counterparts and fellow male officers. The US Air Force also accounts for almost one-half of all female general officers within the Department of Defense. Enlisted females are the most diverse group in the force structure. Despite these successes, female representation in the officer corps has stagnated around 20 percent for the last 25 years. Even the more diverse Company Grade Officer corps is only 21 percent female. The data indicates that while the US Air Force has had success in ensuring female representation, there are still areas for improvement.

As stated in Chapter One, there is no optimal level of diversity.<sup>40</sup> The US Air Force, however, has acknowledged that ignoring diversity could possibly lead to losing “the war for the best and brightest talent available.”<sup>41</sup> If the US Air Force wishes to become the employer of choice for a diverse population, falling behind the other military services is more important than mere service rivalry. Based on the data presented here, the US Air Force has indeed fallen behind its sister services in achieving a diverse force. A diverse force can create a certain momentum, encouraging minorities and females to both enter the US Air Force and make military service a career. Although there is no optimal level of diversity, creating a force structure that ensures access and legitimacy with the American public is extremely beneficial for the US Air Force.

This chapter also presented the US Air Force definition of diversity to establish a baseline for measuring organizational diversity. Admittedly, the data presented here only evaluates the US Air Force progress on achieving racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter One, page 13, for a discussion on the concept of an optimal level of diversity.

<sup>41</sup> Lieutenant General Dick Newton, “Diversity in the Uniformed Air Force,” Power Point Presentation, 15 Jan 09.

The other attributes of the diversity definition – personal life experiences, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, etc – are ill-defined enough to avoid both quantifiable and qualitative measurement at this time. Increasing the aperture of diversity has its benefits – separating diversity from Equal Opportunity for example. An expansive definition, however, does cause difficulties in analysis and evaluation. Although the US Air Force’s definition has merits, the wording creates a vision that is difficult to evaluate. As a result, the organization resorts to tracking the traditional elements of race, ethnicity, and gender.

While this Chapter has presented data and provided context, Chapter Three provides deeper analysis and recommends actions at various points in the officer career pipeline based on diversity literature and best practices. Based on the data presented here, several issues emerge that require further investigation.

- Why are female Airmen more diverse than their male counterparts?
- Why has the US Air Force stagnated at 20 percent female representation?
- What are the root causes behind the lack of diversity in the senior leader ranks?
- What role does the closed personnel system play in developing a diverse force?
- Can the US Air Force capture solutions from areas of the force that demonstrate a higher level of diversity – female officers for example?
- Are there lessons to be learned from other military services, civilian organizations, and diversity literature on both creating and managing a diverse force?

Chapter Three also emphasizes that US Air Force diversity management must keep pace with its desire to recruit a diverse force. As pointed out in Chapter One, merely accessing more diverse recruits is only the first step. Effectively managing diversity to reap its organizational benefits is the ultimate objective.

## Chapter 3

### US Air Force Diversity: Analysis and Recommendations

*We must all be committed to an environment of mutual respect that allows every member of the Air Force team to achieve his or her greatest potential...Air Force capabilities and warfighting skills are enhanced by diversity among its Airmen. At its core, such diversity provides our force an aggregation of strengths, perspectives and capabilities that transcend individual contributions. Air Force people who work in a diverse environment learn to maximize individual strengths and to combine individual abilities and perspectives for the good of the mission.*

*- Airman's Roll Call, April 2008*

The previous chapter presented data along with relevant comparisons in order to answer the first portion of this work's overall research question - Does the US Air Force have sufficient diversity in its officer corps and senior leader positions? This chapter strives to answer the second, and perhaps more important, aspect of the research question – why is the US Air Force struggling to field a diverse force and how can the organization improve the situation? To that end, this chapter serves several purposes. First, the chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of the officer career pipeline to include recruiting/accessions, retention/promotion, and advancement to the senior leader echelons. This comprehensive approach allows for more accurate analysis of current organizational diversity and also pinpoints areas for improvement within the closed personnel system. Second, the chapter highlights the importance of purposeful diversity management in linking diversity with improved mission effectiveness. Third, the chapter offers recommendations for achieving workforce diversity based on current diversity literature and proven best practices. If the previous chapter emphasized today's USAF diversity, this chapter relies on careful analysis and recommendations to improve the diversity of tomorrow's force.



## **Officer Career Pipeline Analysis**

The US Air Force personnel system is a close system. Civilian organizations can often fill perceived deficiencies in its workforce by simply hiring new personnel from outside the organization, even at senior levels. The US Air Force, however, develops its force and senior leaders through a career progression of recruiting, accessions, retention, and promotion. Future US Air Force senior leaders will rise from today's junior officer corps. As a result, improving US Air Force diversity requires a careful balance of short-term solutions that carry long-term consequences. Simply recruiting more female and minority officer candidates is just one step in a 25 year journey towards improved diversity in the senior ranks. Recruiting and accessions simply open the door for future diversity, but new officers must be retained, offered fair promotion opportunities, and developed to one day rise to the general officer ranks.

The first section of this chapter flows in parallel with the officer career pipeline. Beginning with recruiting and accessions, the chapter focuses on the three primary commissioning sources to evaluate current and past efforts at achieving a diverse force. Moving to retention and promotion, the chapter analyzes comparative retention and promotion rates among White males, females, and minorities. Finally, the section evaluates the unique advancement to the general officer ranks and traditional barriers to females and minorities. Beyond structural functionality, organizing the section in this way serves to highlight the strategic chokepoints in developing a more diverse officer corps.

### **Recruiting and Accessions**

The US Air Force has three primary commissioning sources: The United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), and the Officer Training School (OTS). Authorized by Congress in 1954, the US Air Force Academy is located in Colorado Springs, Colorado and serves as the official military academy for the US Air Force. Air Force ROTC offers commissioning opportunities to students at over 1,000 colleges and universities. The US Air Force Officer Training School, located at Maxwell Air Force Base, serves as the commissioning

source for qualified enlisted Airmen and civilians with college degrees. The US Air Force does offer direct commissioning opportunities to certain professional occupations in the medical, legal, and religious career fields. Since the direct commissioning capability only exists for certain, specialized career fields, this chapter will emphasize the three traditional commissioning sources.

Table Five presents the Fiscal Year 07 gender, race, and ethnic demographics from all three primary commissioning sources.<sup>1</sup>

**Table Five: FY 2007 Commissioning Source Demographics**

Source	Male	Female	White	Black	Asian/PI	AI/AN	Hispanic
USAFA	82.2% (801)	17.8% (173)	84.9% (827)	2.8% (28)	4.6% (45)	.4% (4)	2.8% (28)
AFROTC	77.9% (1501)	22.1% (426)	81.3% (1568)	4.4% (85)	5.6% (108)	.6% (12)	1.5% (30)
OTS	85.3% (477)	14.7% (82)	83% (464)	5.9% (33)	5.7% (33)	.3% (2)	2.8% (16)
Total	80.3% (2779)	19.7% (681)	82.6% (2859)	4.2% (146)	5.3% (186)	.5% (16)	2.1% (74)

*Source: FY07 Population Representation in the Military Services*

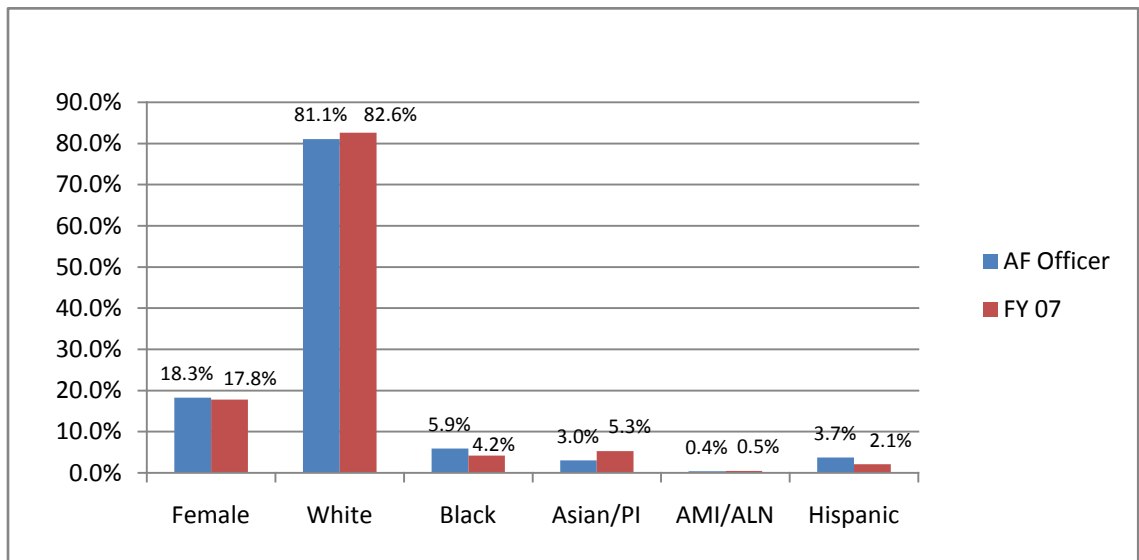
As illustrated in Chapter Two, female representation continues to stagnate at 20 percent. In the end, the three commissioning sources varied only slightly along gender, race, and ethnicity lines in FY 2008 officer production.

To provide context and evaluate possible progress in increasing force diversity, Figure 18 presents the FY 2007 newly commissioned officers alongside the overall officer corps demographics presented in Chapter Two.<sup>2</sup> The officers that entered service

<sup>1</sup> Data obtained from the FY07 Population Representation in the Military Services, Tables B-30 and B-32. The Office of the Undersecretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness, publishes this report each year. The FY07 report is located at <http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/PopRep2007/contents/contents.html> (accessed 7 May 2009). As in previous data sets, the Asian and Pacific Islander racial categories are combined. The category labeled AI/AN stands for American Indian/Alaskan Native. This section uses FY07 production due to data fidelity. The researcher has examined FY08 data, which is similar to FY07.

<sup>2</sup> Total USAF officer corps data obtained from the FY08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD. These percentages mirror Figure 4 in Chapter Two, page 5. FY07 officer data obtained from FY07 Population Representation in the Military Services and mirrors Table 5 in this chapter.

in 2007 were more White (82.6%) than the current overall officer corps (81.1%). New African-American officers were underrepresented (4.2%) when compared to the overall officer corps (5.9%). FY07 Hispanic officers (2.1%) were underrepresented when compared to the overall officer corps (3.7%). The data does reveal significant improvement in the Asian racial category along with an increase in Hispanic officers. While this data provides a snapshot of accessions in 2007, a historical viewpoint reveals certain trends in US Air Force recruiting and accessions.



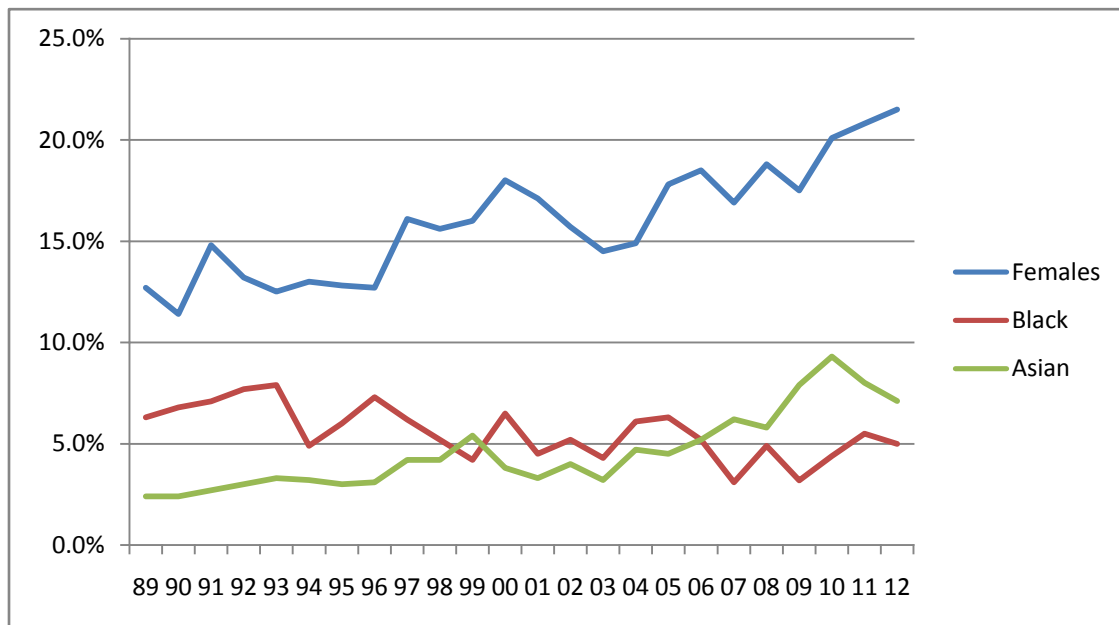
**Figure 18 - Current Air Force Officer Corps and FY 07 Commissionees**

*Source: DEOMI Demographic Profile and FY07 Population Representation*

Figure 19 illustrates both gender and racial demographical trends at the US Air Force Academy over the last 25 years.<sup>3</sup> This data presentation supports several conclusions. First, female representation at USAFA has steadily improved over the past quarter of a century. Until the mid 1990's, female representation stagnated below 15 percent at the US Air Force Academy. Since that time, however, female representation has steadily risen to above twenty percent. In fact, the USAFA Class of 2012, the latest class to enter the Academy, has the highest overall number and percentage of female

<sup>3</sup> US Air Force Academy data obtained from HQ USAFA/XPN, Survey Statistician. For the sake of clarity and emphasis, Figures 19-21 only represent female, Black, and Asian officers. Adding every racial category renders the presentation unreadable. More importantly, the groups presented in these Figures each illustrate a distinct trend worth highlighting. Despite their exclusion from these charts, subsequent discussion does annotate other racial categories and ethnicity for each commissioning source.

cadets.<sup>4</sup> Asian cadet representation has also risen from a 25 year low of 2.4 percent



**Figure 19: Demographics of Incoming USAFA Classes, 1989-2012**

*Source: HQ USAFA/XPN*

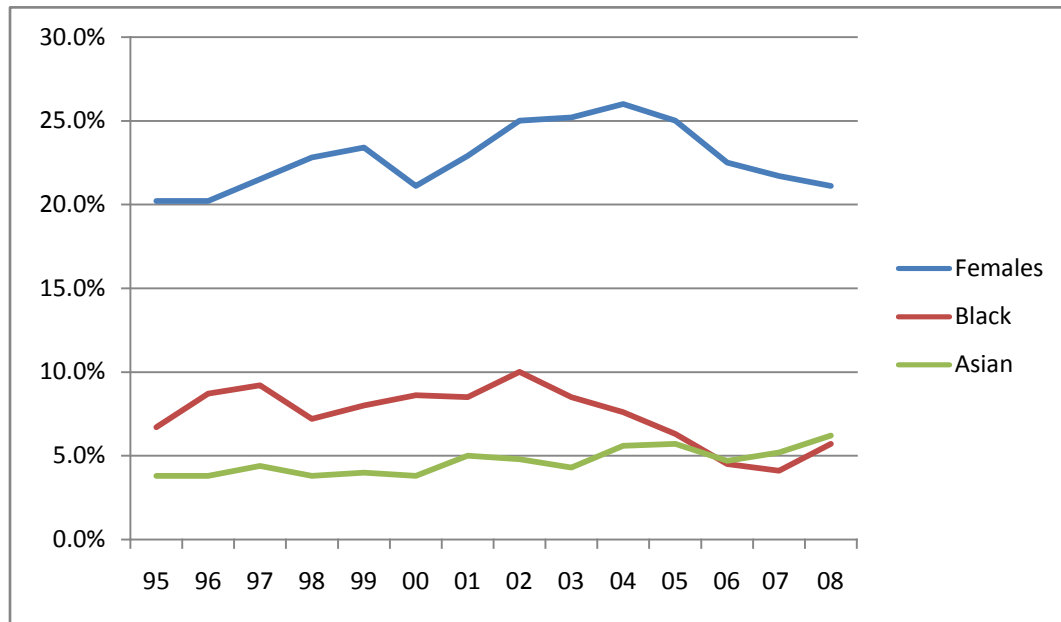
in 1990 to a high of 9.3 percent in the entering class of 2010. Black cadet representation, however, has steadily decreased since the Class of 2005 entered the Academy in the fall of 2001. Although not presented in Figure 19, Hispanic cadet representation has been more erratic over the years but rose to 8.4 percent for the incoming class of 2012. The data also reveals American Indian representation at the Academy has consistently been slightly above 1 percent.

Figure 20 illustrates both gender and racial demographical trends for Air Force ROTC over the last 15 years.<sup>5</sup> As before, the graphic format only represents female, Black, and Asian categories. As with USAFA, AFROTC has seen a steady decrease in Black commissioned officers. Falling from a high of 10 percent in FY 02, new Black officers from AFROTC fell to a 15 year low of 4.1% in FY 07. Although Asian representation has remained steady at approximately 5 percent, recent years show an

<sup>4</sup> US Air Force Academy data obtained from HQ USAFA/XPN, Survey Statistician.

<sup>5</sup> AFROTC data obtained from the Jeanne H. Holm Center Commander's Action Group and their WINGS database. As opposed to the USAFA data presented on incoming classes, the AFROTC data represents actual graduation and commissioning percentages. Enrollment and disenrollment in AFROTC is often more variable than entry into the AF Academy. For example, AFROTC has historically seen a 45 percent attrition rate among freshmen as students enroll out of curiosity and quickly reconsider. As a result, actual commissioning rates are a more viable data set.

increase with a 15 year high of 6.2 percent in 2008. Consistent with past data, female representation has remained at approximately 20 percent. Worth noting, however is the



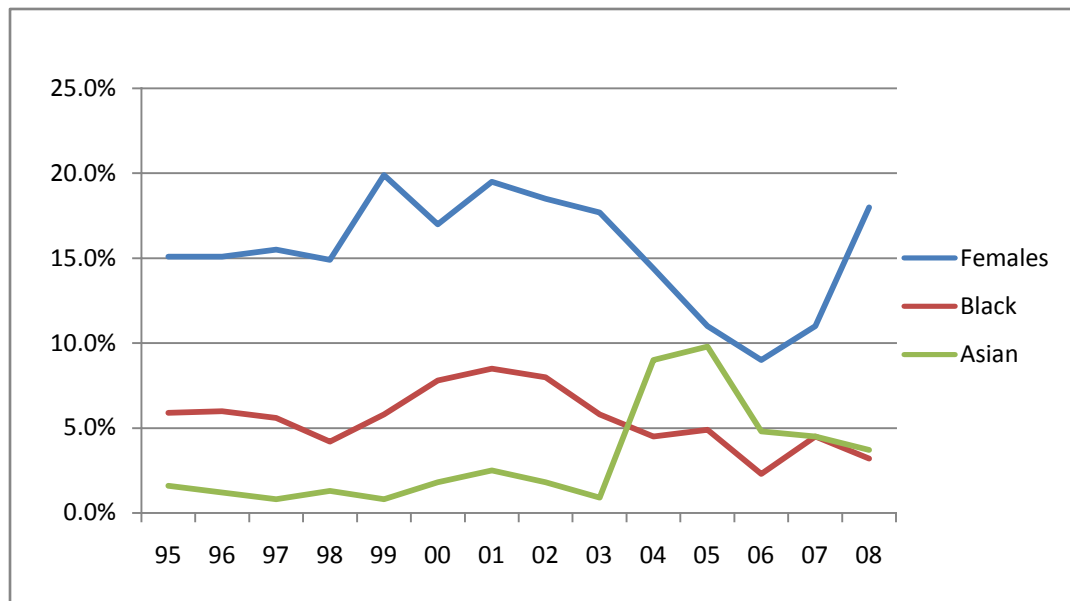
**Figure 20: AFROTC Officer Production, 1995-2008**

*Source: WINGS Database*

gradual decrease in female representation since 2004. Although not presented in Figure 20, Hispanic representation has remained steady at five to six percent over the 15 year period. Consistent with typical Air Force representation, American Indian officers from AFROTC remain below one-half percent.

Figure 21 illustrates both gender and racial demographical trends for the US Air Force Officer Training School over the last 15 years.<sup>6</sup> As with AFROTC, OTS data represents actual graduation and commissioning percentages. In contrast to USAFA and AFROTC, OTS female representation never rose above 20 percent during the 15 year period. In fact, female representation dropped precipitously beginning in 2001, dropping from a high of 19.5 percent to a low of 9 percent in 2006 before recovering. As with USAFA and AFROTC, Black officer production has declined since 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Jeanne H. Holm Center Commander's Action Group, WINGS database.



**Figure 21: OTS Officer Production, 1995-2008**

*Source: WINGS Database*

Asian representation improved dramatically in 2004 and 2005 before returning to more consistent levels.<sup>7</sup>

The data presented here supports several conclusions. The data reveals a negative trend with regards to Black officers over the last several years among all commissioning sources. All three commissioning sources approached 10 percent Black representation at some point during the time period studied only to see those numbers drop dramatically over the last five to ten years. In fact, all three commissioning programs have seen their Black representation cut in half: USAFA from 7.9 percent in 1993 to 3.2 percent in 2009, AFROTC from 10 percent in 2002 to 4.1 percent in 2007, and OTS from 8 percent in 2002 to 3.2 percent in 2008. The data also reveals disturbing trends with female

<sup>7</sup> This dramatic jump may be due to a data abnormality with regards to Asian and American Indian representation. For instance, the same data implies that American Indian representation rose to 24 officers in 2006. This seems highly unlikely since this yearly American Indian representation exceeds the combined total of all other years in this study. Both USAFA and AFROTC have robust data-collecting capabilities, particularly the US Air Force Academy. The Air Force's Officer Training School, however, presents challenges for detailed data research. For example, several data sets only categorize African Americans and "Other Minorities." Depending on the data set, certain presentations either categorize ethnic Hispanics with "Other" racial categories or fail to track ethnicity altogether. Officials at the Jeanne M. Holm Center, the organization that manages both AFROTC and OTS, and the Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) have been extremely helpful during this research project. The problem lies not with individuals but with the data collection process itself for OTS. While this caution to the reader is appropriate, quality data trends are possible with careful cross-reference. The only unsolved data abnormality remains the dramatic, short-lived increase in Asian and American Indian representation in 2005 and 2006.

officer representation from AFROTC and OTS. Both commissioning sources reveal a steady decline over the last five years, although OTS seems to have recovered. Only the Academy has seen a steady rise in female representation. All three commissioning sources have improved Asian officer production, with the Academy achieving the most dramatic upward shift. Despite these improvements, the reduction in new Black officers and stagnant female representation is alarming and requires further attention.

To their credit, USAFA and AFROTC have both adopted aggressive recruiting strategies aimed at increasing officer diversity. Through the US Air Force Academy Strategic Plan, 2008-2013, USAFA highlights “Strength Through Diversity” as one of its seven strategic goals.<sup>8</sup> USAFA has deployed Diversity Affairs Coordinators – 86 specialized Admission Liaison Officers – in 67 geographic regions who “identify, mentor, and evaluate specific, local, diverse candidates through the USAFA application process and lay the groundwork for other outreach efforts.”<sup>9</sup> The Academy has expanded its Diversity Visitation Program that brings 100 highly qualified, diverse students to the Academy for a brief orientation; 80 percent of those that visit accept an appointment to the Academy.<sup>10</sup> The Academy has also built relationships with the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) to offer assistance in the nomination process. In addition, USAFA has tentatively identified seven cities – Chicago, New York, Baltimore, Miami, Atlanta, Dallas, and Los Angeles – to create partnerships with school districts and community organizations. Based on these efforts, the Air Force Academy has decidedly improved its efforts at ensuring a diverse force.

AFROTC has also built a robust recruiting strategy. AFROTC has established long-term relationships with both Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI). Air Force ROTC currently has detachments at seven HBCUs and six HSIs. Over 100 cross-town agreements exist between HBCUs and HSIs and nearby civilian institutions to provide an avenue for minority commissioning opportunities. The detachments at HBCUs and HSIs receive 15 3.5 year scholarships per year and an unlimited number of two-three year scholarships for applicants that meet the

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<sup>8</sup> The USAFA Strategic Plan, 2008-2013, is located at <http://www.usafa.af.mil/uploads/temp/stratPlan/stratPlan.cfm?catname=Strategic%20Plan> (accessed 22 April 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Talking Paper on USAFA Diversity, Obtained from USAFA/RR, Director of Admissions.

<sup>10</sup> Talking Paper on USAFA Diversity, Obtained from USAFA/RR, Director of Admissions.

minimum officer candidate requirements.<sup>11</sup> Air Force ROTC has also established the Officer Recruiting Diversity Program (ORDP), which has successfully assisted over 268 highly qualified minority candidates gain AFROTC scholarships.<sup>12</sup> The Air Staff funded this robust recruiting program from FY 03 through FY 07. Unfortunately, the Air Staff removed funding for FY 08 due to budget reductions. The Holm Center continued to fund the program, however, due to its success. In addition to the ORDP, AFROTC also has a dedicated diversity recruiting office similar to the Air Force Academy. The US Air Force should closely evaluate future USAFA and AFROTC commissioning rates to evaluate these programs and efforts. By all accounts, USAFA and AFROTC have recognized the importance of increasing the diversity of the force and taken promising steps in that direction.

Officer Training School diversity recruiting efforts, however, fall short of efforts at the Academy and AFROTC. A likely explanation for this is structural. The Air Force Academy owns its process from recruit contact to commissioning. Although AFROTC HQ's drives strategic recruiting efforts, AFROTC detachments similarly conduct simultaneous recruiting and commissioning activities. OTS is unique in that different organizations are responsible for recruiting and training operations. The Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base plays no role in recruiting officer candidates – the organization simply trains the candidates that enter the program. The Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) actually governs recruiting for OTS. This division of labor between recruiting and training appears to hamper OTS' capabilities in producing diverse officer candidates. In addition, there are no dedicated Air Force recruiters for officer candidates. Enlisted recruiters assist officer candidates as a secondary duty. More importantly, the AFRS does not have a dedicated diversity recruiting office at this time.

OTS is unique in that it offers the best avenue for enlisted Airmen to enter the officer ranks. As illustrated in Chapter Two, the US Air Force enlisted force is significantly more diverse than its officer corps. In other words, OTS is the primary

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<sup>11</sup> Talking Paper on AFROTC Minority Recruiting Efforts, 16 December 2008, Obtained from AFROTC/DOR.

<sup>12</sup> In the past, critics have charged that diversity recruiting efforts favor certain demographics over quality. In this case, the Officer Recruiting Diversity Program goes after the best and brightest. For example, the median grade point average of ORDP applicants is 3.69 with an average SAT score of 1307. Data on the program drawn from the Talking Paper on AFROTC Minority Recruiting Efforts, 16 December 2008.



vehicle for transferring enlisted Airmen diversity into the officer corps. The low OTS female representation becomes even more alarming when one considers the diversity inherent in the female Enlisted force (see Figure 12 and 13 in Chapter Two on page 15). Recruiting high-quality enlisted Airmen for commissioning opportunities appears to rely on commanders recognizing an Airman's potential and installation Education Offices choosing to stress commissioning opportunities— not dedicated efforts from the Air Force Recruiting Service. Currently, OTS only produces approximately 10 percent of US Air Force commissioned officers (compared to 43 percent for AFROTC and 22 percent for the Air Force Academy).<sup>13</sup> Based on this research, the US Air Force must refocus its attention on the Officer Training School pipeline to take better advantage of the inherent diversity in the enlisted force and civilian population, including possibly expanding OTS' officer production capability.

### **Retention and Promotion**

While recruiting and accessions open the door for more female and minority representation, retention efforts and fair promotion opportunities enable diverse junior officers to advance through the officer pipeline. Despite the US Air Force's best efforts at recruiting a diverse force, if female and minority officers abandon a military career in higher percentages than their White male counterparts, these recruiting efforts are wasted. Diversity research in the civilian sector indicates that high turnover for underrepresented groups is a key indicator of poor diversity management.<sup>14</sup> In addition, groups are more likely to remain in the organization and perform better when fair advancement opportunities are present.<sup>15</sup> If the costs of advancement seem too high or futile, underrepresented groups tend to leave the organization. Similarly, the US Air Force must also focus its attention on retention and fair promotion opportunities to ensure female and minority representation at all levels of the officer corps.

Over the last 15 years, several research projects have focused on the comparative

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<sup>13</sup> These percentages come from the FY07 Population Representation in the Military Services. See note 1 for current report information.

<sup>14</sup> Martha Farnsworth Riche et al, *Literature Review: Empirical Evidence Supporting the Business-Case Approach to Workforce Diversity*, Center of Naval Analyses (CNA) Report D0011482.A2 (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> David E. Bowen and Cheri Ostroff, "Understanding HRM-Firm Performance Linkages: The Role of the Strength of the HRM System." *Academy of Management Review* 28, no. 2 (2004).

retention and promotion rates along racial and gender lines. Looking at seven cohorts of commissioned officers from all services – 1967, 1970, 1977, 1980, 1983, 1987, and 1991 – across all military services, a 2001 RAND study, *Minority and Gender Differences in Officer Progression*, came to the following conclusions when comparing female and minority retention/promotion rates to White male officers:<sup>16</sup>

- Black male officers are more likely to stay in the service but less likely to be promoted.
- White female officers are less likely to stay in service and are slightly less likely to be promoted.
- Black female officers are more likely to stay in the service but less likely to be promoted.

Overall, the study found that Black male officers were the least likely to leave the service while White female officers were the most likely to leave. All three groups – Black males, White females, and Black females – were less likely to be promoted than their White male counterparts. This discrepancy was smaller for White females than Black males and females. The project admittedly focused on Whites and Blacks due to their large sample size when compared to other minorities.

Narrowing the focus to the US Navy and Marine Corps, Stephen Mehay, a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, found that Black naval surface officers and Marine officers were less likely to achieve 0-4 promotion between 1985 and 1990.<sup>17</sup> North et al discovered that Black Marine officers were less likely to be promoted to 0-3 and 0-4.<sup>18</sup> Several Government Accounting Office studies during the 1990's evaluated female and minority career progression and came to similar conclusions.<sup>19</sup> The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness compiled these studies into a broad project entitled, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*. The report concluded that Black males, other male minorities, and Black females were less likely to

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<sup>16</sup> Susan D. Hosek et al, *Minority and Gender Differences in Officer Career Progression*, RAND Report MR-1184 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Stephen L. Mehay, *Analysis of Performance Data for Junior Navy and Marine Corps Officers*, (Monterey, CA: Naval Post Graduate School, October 2005).

<sup>18</sup> James H. North et al, *Successful Officer Careers: Analysis of Augmentation, Promotion, and Voluntary Continuation*, Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) Report 95-55 (Alexandria VA: CNA, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> See for example GAO *Gender Issues: Analysis of Promotion and Career Opportunity Data*, GAO/NSIAD-98-157 (May 1998) and GAO *Military Equal Opportunity: Certain Trends in Racial and Gender Data May Warrant Further Analysis*, GAO/NSIAD-96-17 (November, 1995).

be promoted to all paygrades through 0-5.<sup>20</sup> The study also found that females were less likely to stay in service, especially at the mid-career point between paygrades 0-3 and 0-4. Most studies in this area attempt to isolate the role of gender and race in retention and promotion rates. In reality, however, various factors including commissioning sources, education backgrounds, and occupational areas all contribute to retention and promotion opportunities. The next section of this Chapter will specifically cover the Pilot career field and its role in career progression in the US Air Force.

The studies above, while valuable in their own right, have focused on retention and promotion rates across all military services. In 2006, however, Kraus and Riche examined US Air Force retention and promotion rates in their work, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*.<sup>21</sup> Based on accession data from FY 82 to FY 04, the study examined retention and promotion rates along gender and racial lines. Kraus and Riche use the following racial categories: Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asian/Other. With regards to retention, the authors present “relative continuation rates for women and non-whites measured by the ratios of women’s continuation rates to men’s rates and the ratios of non-whites’ continuation rates to whites rates.”<sup>22</sup> Beginning with retention, Figure 22 represents relative continuation rates by gender.<sup>23</sup> During years two through eight, women are less likely than males to remain in the US Air Force. During the time when most initial service commitments expire (years four through eight), female retention rates are significantly lower than their male counterparts. This data supports the conclusion that the traditional child-rearing years are critical for female retention. Despite recent advancements in gender equal opportunity, research indicates that women still shoulder the responsibility of caring for children and dependents.<sup>24</sup> As a result, female officers seem to face a decision between starting and raising a family and continuing their military career. After year 10 and through 20 years

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<sup>20</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers* (Washington, DC: 1999).

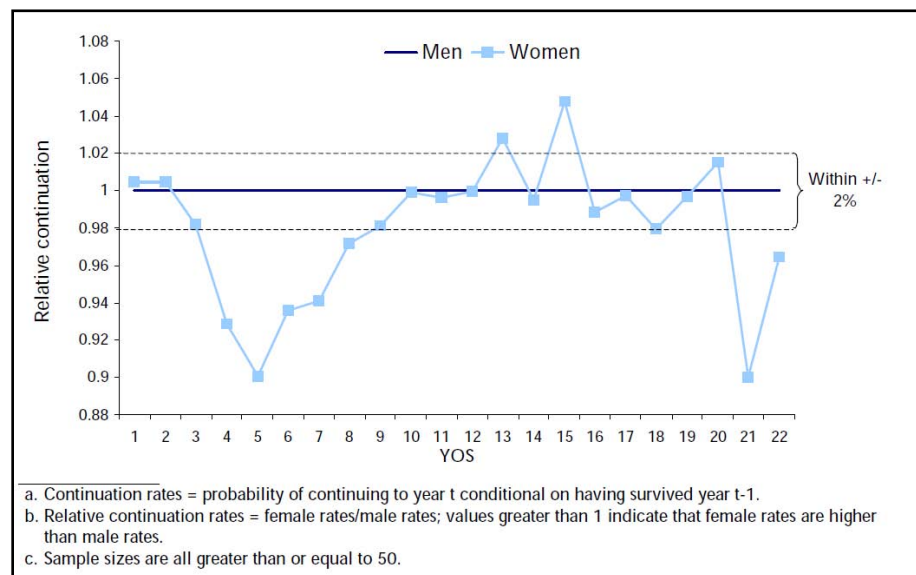
<sup>21</sup> Amanda Kraus and Martha Farnsworth Riche, *Air Force Demographics: From Representation to Diversity*, Center of Naval Analyses (CNA) Report D0013197.A2 (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 66. In Figures 22-24, the authors annotate two percent deviations. Not based on statistical significance, the two percent band provides a benchmark for comparing rates across groups. The acronym YOS stands for Years of Service.

<sup>23</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 72.

<sup>24</sup> Daphne Spain and Suzanne M. Bianchi, *Balancing Act: Motherhood, Marriage, and Employment Among American Women* (New York: Russell Sage, 1996).

of service, female retention rates are similar to male rates. After year 20, when officers become retirement eligible, female officers are once again much less likely to remain in military service. This data suggests that female officers bump up against advancement barriers at the 20 year point and leave the service in greater numbers than males once they are retirement eligible. Military services expect a drop in retention once officers reach retirement eligibility, but the discrepancy between males and females at this career milestone is worth future analysis. By realizing women are more likely to leave the service during the traditional child-rearing years, the US Air Force can better counteract the organizational and societal pressures that force women to choose between work and family.



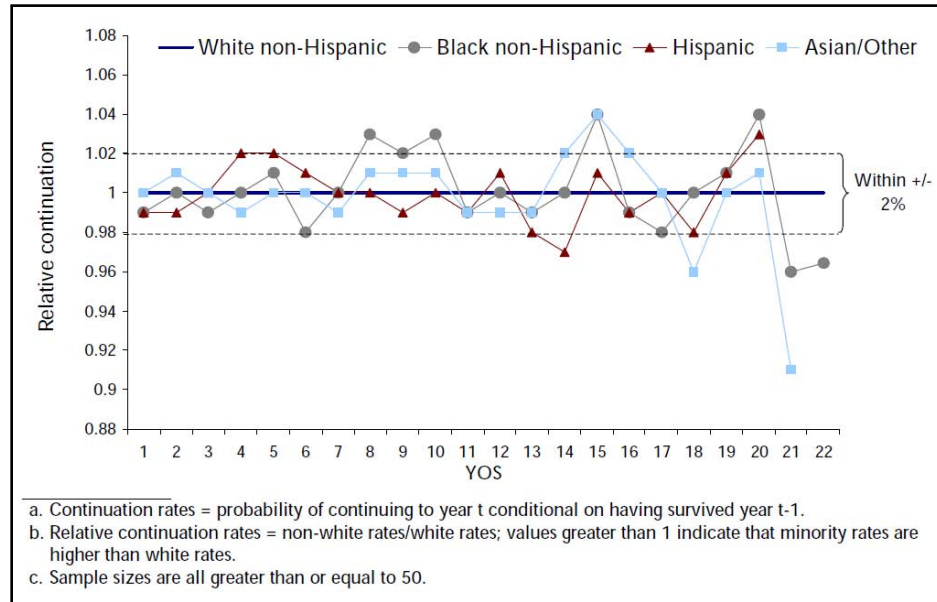
**Figure 22: Relative Continuation Rates By Gender**

*Source: Kraus and Riche, Air Force Demographics*

Retention rates along racial lines, especially among males, are less predictable. Figure 23 presents the relative continuation rates for male officers according to race.<sup>25</sup> The continuation rates between White males and other male minorities vary much less than those along pure gender lines. Kraus and Riche suggest that the absence of a distinct pattern could be due “to the fact that different groups are experiencing effective barriers at different points in their careers, depending on the milestones and opportunities

<sup>25</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 73. The reader should note that Kraus and Riche do not track Hispanic male officers after year 20 due to the small population size of this group.

available to specific occupational communities.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, while continuation rates among males and females seem to hinge on work/family issues, retention along racial lines is probably dependent on more variables. The data does suggest that Black and Asian male officers, similar to female officers, leave military service in greater numbers than White males at the 20 year point. This data, as with female officers, suggests possible barriers to the senior leader echelons for male minorities.



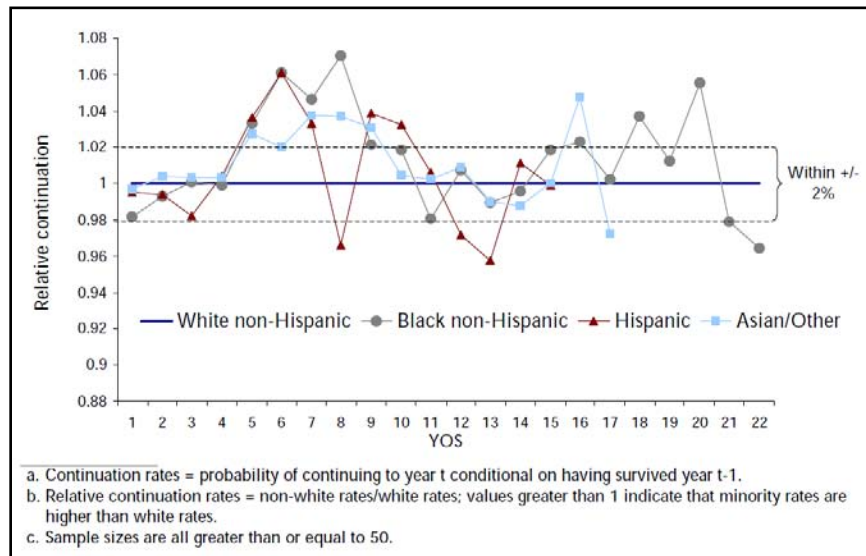
**Figure 23: Relative Continuation Rates For Male Officers By Race**  
Source: Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*

Female officer retention along racial lines, however, is more variable than that of male officers. Figure 24 annotates the relative continuation rates for female officers according to race.<sup>27</sup> Overall, the data illustrates that minority female officers are more likely to stay in the US Air Force than White females between years 4 and 10. The comparative continuation rates even out between years 10 and 15. Chapter Two questioned why female Airmen, both enlisted personnel and officers, were more diverse than their male counterparts. For whatever reason, female minorities, both enlisted and officers, are more likely to remain in the US Air Force than their White female

<sup>26</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 73.

<sup>27</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 74. The reader should note that Kraus and Riche do not track Hispanic and Asian female officers after year 15 and 17 due to the small population size of these groups.

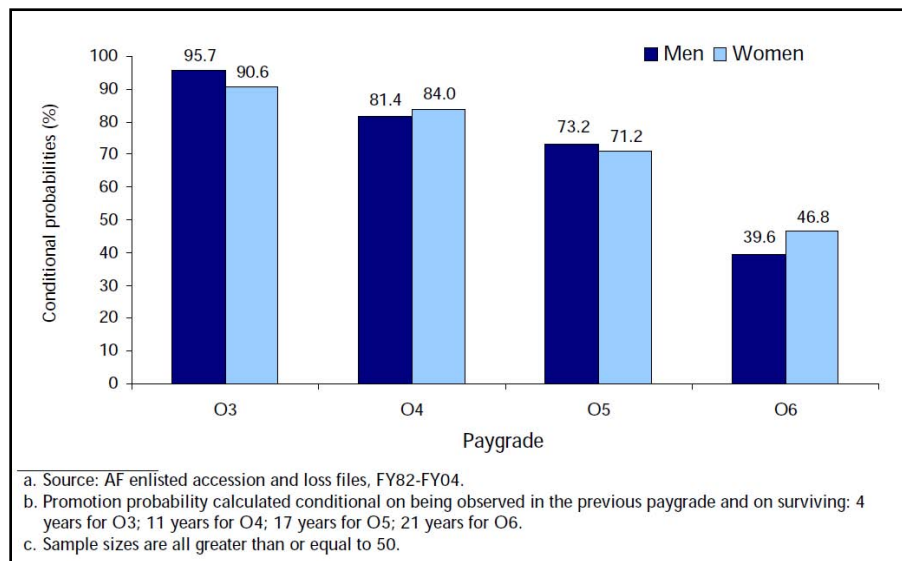
counterparts.



**Figure 24: Relative Continuation Rates For Female Officers By Race**  
Source: Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*

Unlike retention, promotion rates between males and females are fairly equal.

Figure 25 illustrates promotion probabilities by gender.<sup>28</sup>



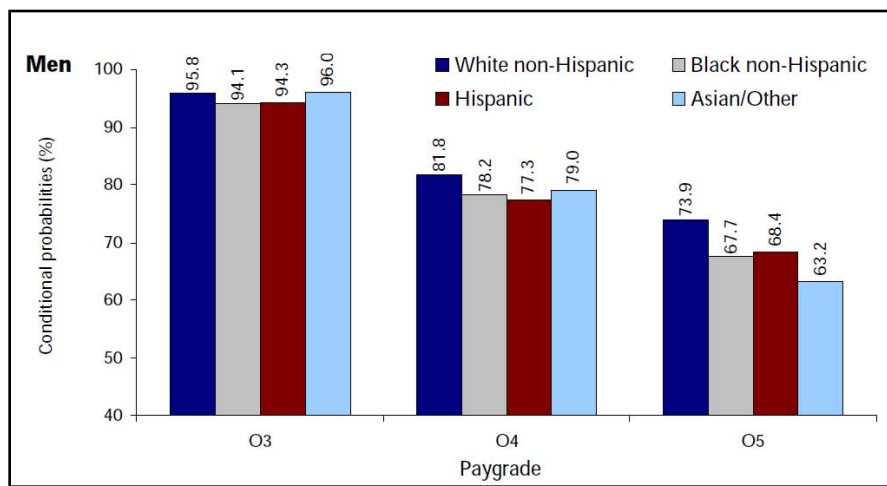
**Figure 25: Promotion Probabilities by Gender**  
Source: Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*

In fact, the data illustrates that women are more likely to be promoted to O-4 and O-6 than their male counterparts. Despite this balance, the next section of this chapter illustrates

<sup>28</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 82.

that promotion equality is less evident at the general officer levels.

Kraus and Riche also present promotion probabilities along racial lines, providing separate data sets for males and females. Figure 26 reveals the promotion rates among White male officers and their minority male counterparts.<sup>29</sup> The data supports the conclusion that minority male promotion rates are lower than Whites for Captain through Lieutenant Colonel, and the disparities become more pronounced at higher ranks.



**Figure 26: Promotion Probabilities for Male Officers by Race**

*Source: Kraus and Riche, Air Force Demographics*

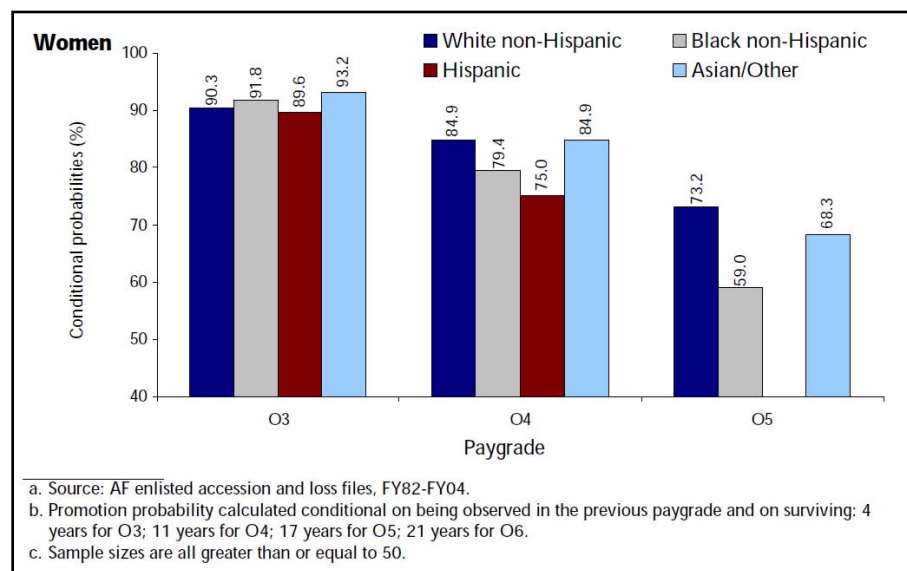
The discrepancy between White males and other minorities is more pronounced as officers progress to higher ranks. The largest discrepancy is the low rate of Asian officers that advance to O-5. Interestingly, this discrepancy is much less pronounced in the enlisted force. For example, Black enlisted Airmen are more likely to reach the grades of E-5, E-6, and E-7 than their White counterparts. White and Black enlisted Airmen enjoy similar promotion rates to the highest enlisted grades of E-8 and E-9.<sup>30</sup> Hispanic and Asian enlisted Airmen, however, also suffer from lower promotion rates than both Whites and Blacks. As the next section illustrates, promotion opportunities in the officer corps are more dependent on occupational fields, specifically the Pilot career

<sup>29</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 84. The reader should note that Figures 26 and 27 do not contain promotion data for the rank of Colonel. Kraus and Riche admit that “the drawback of our approach is that we don’t have a long enough data panel...for any officers beyond the rank of O-6, and, for some groups of officers, we cannot go beyond O-5.” Despite this drawback, Kraus and Riche’s project provides a valuable study of US Air Force promotion data along race, ethnicity, and gender lines.

<sup>30</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 80.

field, than the enlisted force. The enlisted force comparison is used here to illustrate that minorities due enjoy quality promotional opportunities in segments of the force.

There is more promotion variation, however, among female officers. Figure 27 annotates the promotion rates among White female officers and their minority female counterparts.<sup>31</sup> The data illustrates that Black and Hispanic women are much less likely to reach O-4 than White or Asian female officers. Black women are also less likely to reach O-5 than their White counterparts. In fact, the promotion discrepancy between White and Black female officer rates for Lieutenant Colonel (14.2%) is the widest gap between any demographic group, both male and female. Asian female officers, unlike their male counterparts, enjoy greater promotion rates compared to other minorities. Along with the retention rates presented earlier, promotion rates tend to be more variable among female officers. This variation could be due to the smaller female officer population, but it nevertheless requires attention.



**Figure 27: Promotion Probabilities for Female Officers by Race**

*Source: Kraus and Riche, Air Force Demographics*

The data presented here enables the US Air Force to fine tune its efforts at increasing retention and ensuring fair promotion opportunities. For example, retention rates are much more variable among males and females (see Figure 22) as opposed to

<sup>31</sup> Kraus and Riche, *Air Force Demographics*, 84. Kraus and Riche do not track Hispanic female officers at the Lieutenant Colonel point due to the small population size of this group.



race (see Figure 23 and 24). As a result, the US Air Force can focus its retention efforts on ensuring that there is not an organizational gender bias when it comes to work/family issues. Gaining even more precision from the data presented, retention variation among females is more pronounced along racial lines. Therefore, instead of generic retention initiatives, the US Air Force should strive for initiatives that consider female retention in general with specific focus on minority female retention. Similarly for promotion opportunities, the US Air Force should examine the promotion variability along racial lines. Based on the data presented here, those efforts should focus on why the discrepancy grows at higher ranks in the officer corps and not the enlisted corps. As with retention, the organization should pay particular attention to the variance in female minority promotion rates, specifically Black female officers. In this way, data study moves beyond interesting comparisons into the realm of precise adjustments that hopefully increase the diversity of the force.

### **General Officers**

The US Air Force general officer corps is a unique entity, mainly due to its relative size. There are over 322,000 Airmen, both enlisted and officer, in the US Air Force while only approximately 300 individuals currently serve in the rank of general officer – brigadier general (O-7) through four star general (O-10). In other words, less than .1 percent of the force currently holds the rank of general officer. As mentioned in Chapter Two, diversity in the senior ranks is unique for many reasons, including the public's perception of the armed forces and role senior leaders play in dictating strategic direction.<sup>32</sup> Chapter Two also concluded that US Air Force general officers are less racially and ethnically diverse than both the Department of Defense average and all military services.<sup>33</sup> The purpose of this section is to examine the underlying causes for lack of diversity in the US Air Force senior ranks.

This research project concludes that ascension to the rank of general officer is primarily a result of occupational career field – specifically the Pilot career field. Due to the demographics of the Pilot career field, however, race and gender also serve as

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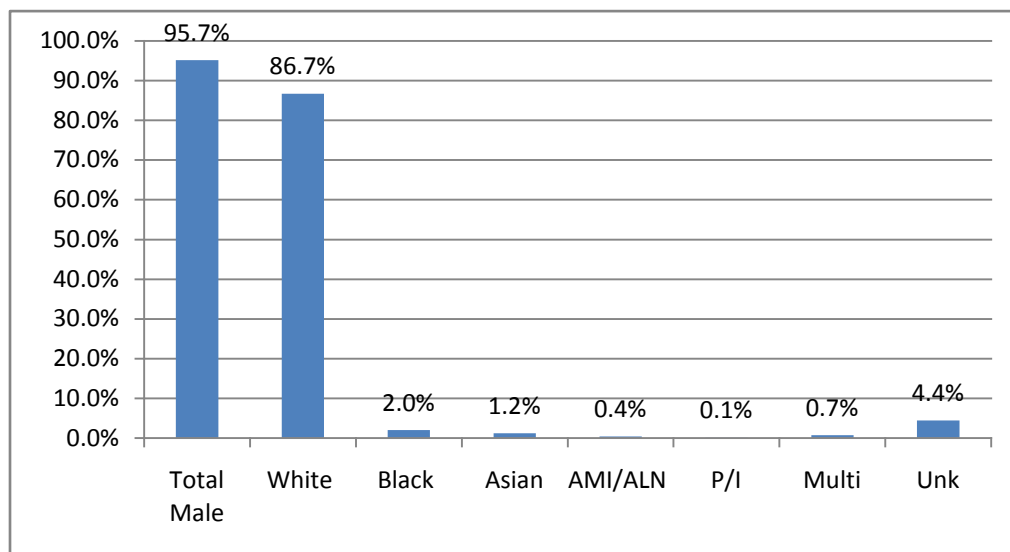
<sup>32</sup> See Chapter Two, page 17, for a detailed discussion on the unique aspect of the senior leader echelons.

<sup>33</sup> For example, see Figure 15 in Chapter Two, page 18.

contributing factors. In other words, the scarcity of diversity in the Pilot career field is linked to the scarcity of diversity in the general officer ranks. This section analyzes the career field demographics of the current general officers corps with emphasis on race and gender.<sup>34</sup>

Sixty one percent of current general officers in the US Air Force are Pilots. This percentage is more relevant when one considers that Pilots only account for 18 percent of US Air Force officers.<sup>35</sup> The pilot representation increases even more dramatically at the three and four-star ranks. Of the 13 current four-star generals, 12 are Pilots (92%). Of the 38 current three-star generals, 27 are Pilots (71%). As result, 76 percent of three and four star general officers are Pilots. Although to a lesser degree, Pilots are still overrepresented at the two-star level (64%) and one-star level (54%) compared to other career fields.

With Pilots representing such a large majority of general officers, research naturally shifts to a demographic profile of the career field. Figures 28 and 29 present the demographics of the Pilot career field along gender and racial lines.<sup>36</sup>



**Figure 28: Male Pilot Representation, Race**

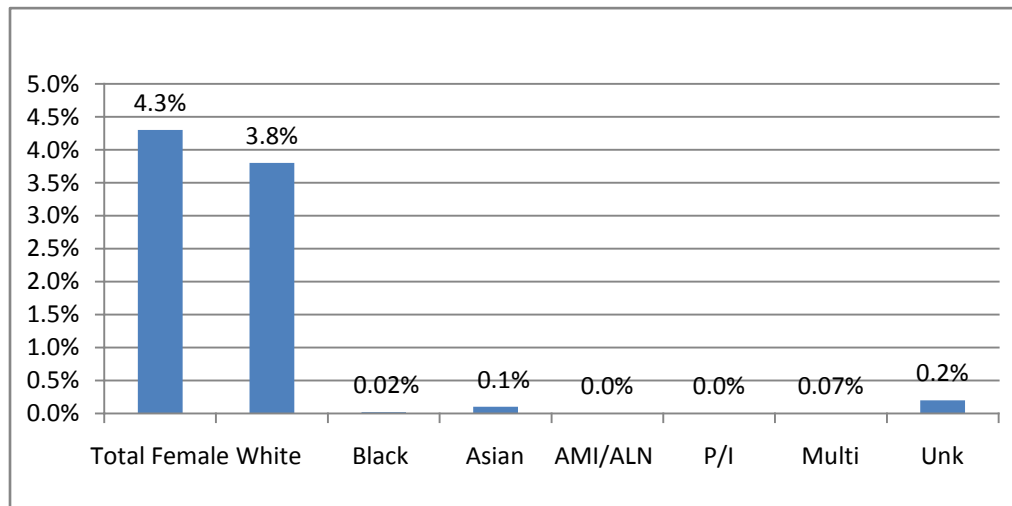
*Source: IDEAS Database*

<sup>34</sup> General Officer data on career field, race, ethnicity, and gender obtained from the Air Force's General Officer Management Office, AF/DPG, and an analysis of all Active Duty general officer biographies.

<sup>35</sup> This data combines FY08 DEOMI Demographic Profile of DoD with data obtained from the AF's Interactive Demographic Analysis System (IDEAS).

<sup>36</sup> FY08 data obtained from the AF's Interactive Demographic Analysis System (IDEAS).

These two figures combine to form a startling, and disturbing, picture of the US Air Force Pilot force. First, the Pilot force is overwhelmingly male. Females account for 18.3 percent of US Air Force officers (see Figure 7) but only represent 4.3 percent of Pilots. The raw numbers behind these percentages only highlight the disparity. Only 512 Pilots are female compared to 11,406 males. Among the male Pilots, White males dominate the career field at 86.7 percent representation. Of the 11,406 male pilots, only 546 are non-white. Most surprising is the representation among female minorities. The reader should keep in mind that these are raw numbers, not percentages: 3 Black female Pilots, 13 Asian female Pilots, and 9 Multi-race female Pilots.



**Figure 29: Female Pilot Representation, Race**

*Source: IDEAS Database*

Put another way, out of 11,918 total Pilots at the end of FY08, only 25 were female minorities. Of all the statistics presented in this study, these numbers are both the most startling and the most worthy of US Air Force attention.

When one combines the demographic breakdown of the Pilot career field with the fact that 61 percent of general officers are Pilots, the lack of diversity in the senior echelons is no surprise. Table 6 compares the demographics of the Pilot career field with the demographics of the general officer corps.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Data obtained from the Air Force's General Officer Management Office, AF/DPG, and IDEAS Database.

**Table 6: Pilot and General Officer Demographic Comparison**

Pilot Demographics	General Officer Demographics
Males – 95.7%	Males – 91.1%
Females – 4.3%	Females – 8.9%
Blacks – 2.1%	Blacks – 3.8%
Asians – 1.3%	Asians – 1.0%
All Other Groups - < 1% or Absent	All Other Groups - < 1% or Absent

*Source: IDEAS Database and AF/DPG Data*

No other comparison group – overall officer corps, US population, commissioning source, etc – more closely parallels general officer corps demographics than Pilot career field demographics. Reyes highlights a similar situation in the US Army where Black officers are underrepresented in the combat arms branches – career fields that traditionally supply the general officer ranks (59 percent in 2006).<sup>38</sup> Reyes concluded that “given that the combat arms branches represent by far the single largest source for general officers, the racial diversity of these branches affects that of the senior ranks.”<sup>39</sup> The same concept holds true in the US Navy where ship assignment and upgrade to Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) plays a major role in promotion opportunities.<sup>40</sup> The demographic makeup of today’s junior officers contribute to the diversity of tomorrow’s senior leaders, but the demographic of today’s Pilot force will play an even greater role.

The data presented here drives a vital question – why are females and minorities so scarce in the Pilot career field? To answer this question, one must examine an important criterion the US Air Force utilizes to screen pilot candidates – the Air Force Officer Qualification Test (AFOQT). The US Air Force instituted the AFOQT, a standardized test similar to the SAT and ACT, in 1953 to lower the attrition rate of pilot

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<sup>38</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Reyes, *Strategic Options for Managing Diversity in the US Army*, (Military Fellow Research Report: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2006), 14.

<sup>39</sup> Reyes, *Strategic Options for Managing Diversity in the US Army*, 14.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen L. Mehay, *Analysis of Performance Data for Junior Navy and Marine Corps Officers*, (Monterey, CA: Naval Post Graduate School, October 2005).

candidates. The organization has revised the test 16 times since, most recently in 2003.<sup>41</sup> The test provides results in five areas: Pilot, Navigator, Academic Aptitude, Verbal, and Quantitative (Math). AFROTC cadets have traditionally taken the test during their freshmen year. OTS candidates also take the AFOQT. For both AFROTC and OTS, the US Air Force uses the AFOQT as a selection criterion for flying training. To compete for Undergraduate Pilot Training, AFROTC cadets and OTS applicants must score 25 on the Pilot section and 10 on the Navigator section. USAFA cadets also take the AFOQT, but the institution does not use test scores as a criterion for screening candidates for flying training.

In reviewing AFOQT scores from FY 03 through FY 07, AFROTC discovered significant barriers for female and minority cadets.<sup>42</sup> During this time period, 13.2 percent of total cadets did not meet the minimum Pilot score to compete for flying training. More importantly, females performed significantly worse than their male counterparts. 28.6 percent of female cadets failed to make the minimum score compared to only 8.5 percent for male cadets. Minorities also fared worse than their White counterparts. 27.3 percent of minority cadets failed to meet the minimum standard versus 7.9 percent for White cadets. The discrepancy in scores was even more profound among Black cadets – 59.6 percent of Black cadets failed to achieve the minimum Pilot score to qualify for UPT. Air Force ROTC concluded that the “AFOQT-P (Pilot section) minimum score of 25 is the single largest hurdle to UPT for females and African-Americans.”<sup>43</sup> Females were three times more likely to be ineligible than their male counterparts while Blacks were seven times more likely to be ineligible than their White counterparts.

Air Force ROTC theorized that the timing of test administration played a role in the poor scores among females and minorities. As mentioned previously, AFROTC cadets historically completed the test at the beginning of their freshmen year. To test this theory, AFROTC allowed the FY 08 and FY 09 graduating cadets who had only tested

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<sup>41</sup> “Minority and Female Representation in AFROTC Pilot Slots,” Power Point Presentation, 23 December 2008, Obtained from AFROTC/DOR.

<sup>42</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all AFOQT data is drawn from the briefing “Minority and Female Representation in AFROTC Pilot Slots,” 23 December 2008.

<sup>43</sup> “Minority and Female Representation in AFROTC Pilot Slots,” Power Point Presentation, 23 December 2008.

once to retake the examination. In all, AFROTC received over 2,400 new scores. AFROTC combined these new scores with historical scores to compare one-time accomplishment during a cadet's freshmen year with results from retakes during the third year of AFROTC. Table Seven highlights the decreased levels of failures along gender and racial lines when cadets accomplished the test later in their college career.<sup>44</sup> The data illustrates dramatic improvement for all groups when AFROTC administered the test later in cadets' college career. As a result, Air Force ROTC recommended cadets wishing to pursue a flying career retake the AFOQT during their third year. Based on data presented here, this project recommends that Air Force ROTC make this change permanent to open the aperture for female and minority cadets.

**Table 7: Percentage of UPT Disqualifications Due to AFOQT Scores**

Group	First Test as Freshmen	Second Test in Third Year
All	18.4%	1.7%
Male	10.6%	4.0%
Female	29.7%	1.1%
White	8.5%	3.1%
Minorities (All)	35.7%	8.8%
Blacks	57.8%	22.2%

*Source: AFROTC PPT Briefing, Minority and Female Representation in AFROTC Pilot Slots*

The purpose of this section was to present a comprehensive analysis of the officer career pipeline to include recruiting/accessions, retention/promotion, and advancement to the senior leader echelons. The section presented detailed data to enable more accurate analysis of current organizational diversity and pinpoint areas for improvement within the closed personnel system. In the recruiting/accessions arena, the US Air Force should focus attention on improving the representation of Black officer candidates and females. Particular attention must be paid to the Officer Training School, the primary pipeline for diverse enlisted Airmen joining the officer ranks. Retention efforts should focus on

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<sup>44</sup> "Minority and Female Representation in AFROTC Pilot Slots," Power Point Presentation, 23 December 2008.

ameliorating the traditional struggle that females face between work and family. The US Air Force should also examine why minorities become less competitive for promotion at higher ranks. Finally, to improve diversity in future senior leader echelons, the organization should closely analyze Undergraduate Pilot Training selection and throughput to ensure females and minorities are adequately represented. By taking these steps, the US Air Force increases its chance to field a force tomorrow that is much more diverse than the force today. In the end, however, this progress must be matched with a focus on purposeful diversity management and incorporation of best practices to both reap the benefits of diversity in the future and avoid the potential negative affects of increased diversity outlined in Chapter One.

### **Diversity Management and Best Practices**

The purpose of this section is to highlight the importance of diversity management in several ways. First, the section presents a brief literature review on the value of diversity management and how it differs from traditional Equal Employment Opportunity compliance. Second, the section details several studies that highlight best practices in the field of diversity management. Finally, the section applies these best practices to the US Air Force at the individual, group, and organizational level. This combination of theory and practical application should serve the US Air Force well in its quest to field a diverse force.

Quality diversity management is the most important link in any effort to improve workforce diversity or reap the benefits from current diversity. Tsui and Gutek claim that “diversity is a liability until and unless processes are in place to manage the negative dynamic and to release diversity’s hidden potential.”<sup>45</sup> In 1987, Johnston and Packer released a groundbreaking study entitled *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.<sup>46</sup> The authors warned that human resource policies and practices designed in the 1970’s and 1980’s would not be sufficient for a twenty-first century workforce composed of more females and minorities as a result of changing demographics. Most

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<sup>45</sup> Anne S. Tsui and Barbara A. Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations: Current Research and Future Directions* (New York: Lexington Books, 1999), 143.

<sup>46</sup> W.B. Johnston and A.E. Packer, *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, (Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute, 1987).

researchers credit Roosevelt Thomas for coining the phrase “diversity management” in the early 1990’s.<sup>47</sup> For purposes of this research project, diversity management is an organization’s commitment to “recruit, retain, reward, and promote a heterogeneous mix of productive, motivated, and committed workers”<sup>48</sup> Diversity management serves as the essential link between workforce diversity and reaping the benefits of diversity. Without quality diversity management, many researchers claim that “rules, regulations and procedures that unintentionally discriminate” against minority groups in the workforce will persist. Figure 30 highlights the differences between traditional Equal Employment Opportunity practices and the more current diversity management movement.<sup>49</sup>

<i>EEO/AA</i>	<i>Managing Diversity</i>
Mandatory	Voluntary
Legal, social, moral justification	Productivity, efficiency, and quality
Focuses on race, gender, ethnicity	Focuses on all elements of diversity
Changes the mix of people	Changes the systems/operations
Perception of preference	Perception of equality
Short term and limited	Long term and ongoing
Grounded in assimilation	Grounded in individuality

**Figure 30: Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management**

*Source: GAO Report: Diversity Management Expert-Identified Leading Practices*

In an effort to aid organizations in improving diversity management practices, several research projects have focused on best practices in both achieving workforce diversity and harnessing its capabilities. The US Department of Commerce joined with Vice President Al Gore’s National Partnership for Reinventing Government in 2000 to produce a study entitled *Best Practices in Achieving Workforce Diversity*.<sup>50</sup> The study highlighted three primary elements of quality diversity management: (1) Leadership Commitment, (2) Strategic Planning, and (3) Employment Involvement. In 2005, the Government Accountability Office study, *Diversity Management: Expert-Identified*

<sup>47</sup> R. Roosevelt Thomas, “From Affirmative Action to Affirming Diversity,” *Harvard Business Review* 68 (1990): 107-117.

<sup>48</sup> Ivancevich, J. M., & Gilbert, J. A., “Diversity Management: Time for a New Approach.” *Public Personnel Management* 29 (2000): 75-92.

<sup>49</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Diversity Management: Expert-Identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples*, GAO-05-90 (Washington, DC: GAO, January 2005).

<sup>50</sup> The US Department of Commerce and Vice President Al Gore’s National Partnership for Reinventing Government, *Best Practices in Achieving Workforce Diversity* (Washington, DC, 2000).



*Leading Practices and Agency Examples*, presented nine leading diversity management practices identified by a majority of experts. Figure 31 highlights the study's findings.<sup>51</sup> The reader should note that both studies highlight the value of leadership commitment, strategic planning, and employee involvement.

- **Top leadership commitment**—a vision of diversity demonstrated and communicated throughout an organization by top-level management.
- **Diversity as part of an organization's strategic plan**—a diversity strategy and plan that are developed and aligned with the organization's strategic plan.
- **Diversity linked to performance**—the understanding that a more diverse and inclusive work environment can yield greater productivity and help improve individual and organizational performance.<sup>a</sup>
- **Measurement**—a set of quantitative and qualitative measures of the impact of various aspects of an overall diversity program.
- **Accountability**—the means to ensure that leaders are responsible for diversity by linking their performance assessment and compensation to the progress of diversity initiatives.
- **Succession planning**—an ongoing, strategic process for identifying and developing a diverse pool of talent for an organization's potential future leaders.
- **Recruitment**—the process of attracting a supply of qualified, diverse applicants for employment.
- **Employee involvement**—the contribution of employees in driving diversity throughout an organization.
- **Diversity training**—organizational efforts to inform and educate management and staff about diversity.

**Figure 31: Leading Diversity Management Practices**

Source: GAO Report: Diversity Management *Expert-Identified Leading Practices*

Before presenting current US Air Force diversity management practices, another lens of analysis is useful. Current diversity literature identifies three levels for diversity management focus: individuals, groups/work teams, and organizations.<sup>52</sup> For example, diversity training is a primary element of diversity management at the individual level. Teaching communication and conflict management skills is a traditional diversity management technique at the group/team level. Gaining leadership commitment is typically viewed as a diversity management practice that targets the organizational level. Acknowledging these three distinct levels of diversity management enables more precise, and hopefully effective, diversity management. The US Air Force incorporates these three levels of diversity management in its Leadership Diversity Toolkit.<sup>53</sup> To best

<sup>51</sup> GAO Report, *Diversity Management*, 4.

<sup>52</sup> For example see Tsui and Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations*, 169.

<sup>53</sup> The Air Force Leadership Diversity Toolkit is a 2 page pamphlet produced by the Office of Strategic Diversity Integration, SAF/MRD. Available on SAF/MRD's AF Portal website, the pamphlet includes

evaluate and improve current US Air Force diversity management practices, this research combines elements of the best practices highlighted in Figure 31 at the individual, group, and organizational level.

In the past, the US Air Force has struggled to keep pace with other federal agencies, including military organizations, in the arena of diversity management. For example, Kellough and Naff presented a study in 2004 of 160 federal agencies and subagencies to “gauge the extent to which they have developed diversity management programs.”<sup>54</sup> The authors ranked the 137 organizations that responded to the project’s survey in the following categories: Training, Communication, Accountability, Additional Resource Commitment, and Demographic Scope. The US Coast Guard was the overall top-ranked organization in the study. The Office of the Secretary of the Army was also ranked in the top ten. The US Air Force, however, did not fare well when compared to other federal organizations. The highest ranked US Air Force organization was Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) at number 28. Other organizations within the US Air Force were scattered throughout the rankings: Air Education and Training Command (#29), Air Mobility Command (#57), Special Operations Command (#63), US Air Force Academy (#66), US Air Forces, Europe (#87), Space Command (#104), and Air Combat Command (#125). It is important to note that although Kellough and Naff’s article was published in 2004, the survey and rankings were compiled in the Spring of 1999. Although this particular study revealed US Air Force shortcomings in the area of diversity management, efforts have been made to improve over the last nine years.

At the individual level, US Air Force diversity management has centered primarily on diversity training. Despite its inclusion in the GAO report on best practices, diversity training has limitations. In their study on diversity training, Rynes and Rosen found that even though 75 percent of trainees saw an improvement in diversity attitudes, only one-third of respondents believed any diversity training would bring

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USAF Diversity Principles, Diversity Management techniques, and sources of current diversity research. Available at [www.deomi.org/DiversityMgmt/documents/USAFDiversityToolkit.pdf](http://www.deomi.org/DiversityMgmt/documents/USAFDiversityToolkit.pdf) (accessed 13 May 2009).

<sup>54</sup> J. Edward Kellough and Katherine Naff, “Responding to a Wake-Up Call: An Examination of Federal Agency Diversity Management Programs,” *Administration & Society* 36, no. 1 (2004).

lasting change.<sup>55</sup> Diversity training is often too impersonal and standardized to have any real lasting affect. Consequently, the US Air Force should examine the possibility of diversity training crafted at the unit-level to enable more personalized approaches.

Unlike potentially impersonal diversity training, mentoring serves as an invaluable tool in ensuring quality diversity management at the individual level. Tsui and Gutek highlight “mentoring and networking for nontraditional employees” as a key facet of diversity management at the individual level.<sup>56</sup> Solid mentor/protégé relationships enable experienced Airmen to communicate organizational expectations to younger officers and create roadmaps for advancement within the organization.<sup>57</sup> The US Air Force must ensure, however, that female and minority officers are not solely mentored by fellow females and minorities. Gender and race should not serve as the primary qualifiers for mentor/protégé matching. Currently, no formal mentoring program exists specifically for underrepresented groups such as female or Black officers – a situation the US Air Force should consider changing. More importantly, the US Air Force must realize that employee involvement – a best practice annotated in both the Reinventing Government and GAO study – is vital for diversity management at the individual level. As the US Air Force engages with its Airmen, whether through training, mentoring, or other efforts, the organization must ensure Airmen themselves are involved and contribute to the effort.

For diversity management at the group level, the US Air Force has an advantage. Research shows that “creating a superordinate goal that is meaningful to each person can decrease intergroup conflict.”<sup>58</sup> In an organization with a mission oriented culture, such as the US Air Force, getting the job done typically takes precedence over perceived group differences. In a study focused on the impact of diversity on Air Force mission performance, the authors found that Airmen were more likely to perceive demographic, cognitive, and global diversity as having a positive impact on mission performance.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> S. Rynes and B. Rosen, “A Field Survey of Factors Affecting the Adoption and Perceived Success of Diversity Training,” *Personnel Psychology* 48 (1995): 247-270.

<sup>56</sup> See Chapter One, Figure 3, page 14.

<sup>57</sup> For example, see Dugan et al, “The Glass Ceiling: Potential Causes and Possible Solutions,” (Alexandria VA: Human Resources Research Organization, 1993).

<sup>58</sup> Riche and Krause, *Literature Review*, 80-81.

<sup>59</sup> Amanda Kraus et al, *The Impact of Diversity on Air Force Mission Performance: Analysis of Deployed Service-member’s Perceptions of the Diversity/Capability Relationship*, Center of Naval Analyses (CNA)

Only with structural diversity - interworkings between Active, Reserve, and Guard personnel – did survey respondents cite a negative impact. Tsui and Gutek use social psychology to demonstrate that cooperation within a group does not occur naturally in the highly competitive American society.<sup>60</sup> By continuing to stress its “service before self” core value, the US Air Force can harness this competitive spirit and channel it toward mission accomplishment and away from personal differences. At the practical level, the US Air Force Leadership Diversity Toolkit recommends teaching group members’ to recognize differences, emphasize mission related commonalities, and hone conflict management skills.<sup>61</sup>

Currently, US Air Force diversity management is primarily focused at the organizational level. This is only natural when one considers the best practices annotated in Figure 31. Leadership commitment, strategic planning, recruiting, organizational culture and several other best practices naturally reside at the organizational level. Over the past several years, leadership commitment to diversity has been extremely strong in the US Air Force. In a January 2009 Letter of Intent, both the US Air Force Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Air Force listed diversity as a major priority along with more traditional military efforts such as supporting the Global War on Terrorism and reinvigorating the nuclear enterprise.<sup>62</sup> In a recent diversity video, the US Air Force Chief of Staff, along with other senior leaders, expounded on the benefits of a diverse force. In the spring of 2008, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne issued an Air Force Diversity Statement which declared, “Air Force capabilities and warfighting skills are enhanced by diversity among its Airmen.”<sup>63</sup> Based on these examples, senior leadership in the US Air Force has shown a clear commitment to diversity. To take full advantage of this commitment, however, senior leaders must ensure that commanders down through the MAJCOM, NAF, Wing, Group, and Squadron levels also make diversity a high priority.

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Report D0015452.A2 (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2007), 2. In addition, see Chapter One, page 4, for a detailed explanation of demographic, cognitive, structural, and global diversity.

<sup>60</sup> Tsui and Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations*.

<sup>61</sup> See Note 53 for more details on the Air Force Leadership Diversity Toolkit.

<sup>62</sup> Michael D. Donley, Secretary of the Air Force, and General Norton Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff, to MAJCOM Commanders and HAF 2-Letters, Dual Signed Letter of Intent, memorandum, 22 Jan 2009.

<sup>63</sup> Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, Air Force Diversity Statement, 27 March 2008.

In addition to leadership commitment, the US Air Force has also begun to link diversity initiatives with its strategic planning. In April 2009, senior leaders approved the formation of a Diversity Operations Office within AF/A1. This new organization is modeled after the Army's Diversity Office and will serve as the focal point for all diversity issues. Although organizations such as the AF Academy and AFROTC have developed robust diversity initiatives, the US Air Force must coordinate its diversity efforts across the force. As presented earlier in this chapter, diversity management must stretch across the spectrum from recruiting/accessions and retention/promotion to advancement to the senior ranks. The new Diversity Operations Office's first order of business will be to craft the new US Air Force Diversity Gameplan – a new diversity strategic plan that General Norton Schwartz called for his January 2009 Letter of Intent.

Along with its emphasis on diversity within the context of strategic planning, the US Air Force has also explicitly linked diversity with mission performance. In a November 2008 Airman's Roll Call publication, the US Air Force declared that "increasing awareness of diversity enables the Air Force to maximize individual strengths and create synergies that facilitate mission success."<sup>64</sup> As mentioned previously, recent Air Force diversity statements have also explicitly connected diversity with improved mission performance. Although empirical research is inconclusive on the subject, linking diversity to performance indicates that the US Air Force is moving beyond the Equal Employment Opportunity paradigm that focuses on compliance to a vision of diversity that brings inherent value to the fight. By linking the two concepts of diversity and mission effectiveness, the US Air Force creates a culture where diversity is more valued.

There are several areas of diversity management at the organizational level, however, where the US Air Force must improve. To that end, the organization should focus more effort in the areas of recruiting and succession planning. As illustrated in Figure 31 (see page 26), succession planning involves identifying and developing a diverse pool of talent for an organization's future leaders. Despite the efforts of the Air Force Academy and AFROTC described in the first section of this chapter, the US Air Force is still struggling to become the employer of choice for certain demographics,

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<sup>64</sup> Airman's Roll Call, Nov 12 – Nov 18, 2008, located at <http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-081113-064.pdf> (accessed 7 May 2009).

primarily females and Black officer candidates. Focusing recruiting efforts on underrepresented groups also directly influences succession planning. As the previous discussion on the Pilot career field illustrates, failing to ensure adequate representation in career fields that feed the senior ranks hampers efforts to ensure a future diverse general officer corps. Although improvement in these areas is paramount to developing a diverse force for tomorrow, the US Air Force appears to recognize these issues – a vital first step in improving the situation.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to answer the second portion of the overall research question – why is the US Air Force struggling to field a diverse force and how can the organization improve the situation? The comprehensive analysis of the officer career pipeline highlighted specific areas in recruiting/accessions, retention/promotion, and advancement to senior ranks that hamper the organization's current ability to field a diverse force. This focus on the entire officer career progression provided a more accurate analysis of current organizational diversity and pinpointed areas for future improvement within the closed personnel system. The second section of this chapter highlighted the importance of diversity management. In addition, the section presented best practices for building and enhancing diversity at the individual, group, and organizational level. While Chapter Two evaluated current diversity in the US Air Force, this chapter strove to provide the foundation for future US Air Force diversity efforts.

## Conclusion

### US Air Force Diversity: Final Thoughts

*The United States is founded upon the belief that every person has unalienable rights and matchless value. Throughout our Nation's history, brave patriots have made great sacrifices to protect this ideal and to advance the cause of freedom around the world. On the 60th anniversary of the integration of the United States Armed Forces, we pay tribute to all our service members and veterans, and we underscore our Nation's commitment to equality.*

*- President George W. Bush*

This section presents final recommendations and conclusions based on the data presented throughout this project. Although previous chapters have offered a myriad of suggestions and conclusions, this final summary leaves the reader with the most pressing issues and concerns. Beginning with the theoretical foundation presented in Chapter One, the US Air Force must examine its definition of diversity and desire to link diversity with improved performance. Based on current recruiting and accessions data, the service must also focus its attention on improving female and African-American officer representation. To that end, final recommendations give special emphasis to the Officer Training School commissioning source. On the retention front, the US Air Force should reexamine its efforts at easing the work/family relationship for female officers. Finally, the service must pay close attention to the Pilot career field and the scarcity of females and minorities. Although not all-inclusive, this chapter does address the most pressing issues for US Air Force diversity efforts.

The US Air Force should reevaluate its definition of diversity or devise metrics to measure the qualities outlined in the current definition. The official definition offers a perfect example of the modern, expanded view of diversity that delineates modern diversity from Equal Employment Opportunity compliance. Unfortunately, the current construct creates a dichotomy between the definition and data the US Air Force monitors. In other words, while the definition highlights cognitive abilities, personalities, and life experiences, the organization still solely focuses and tracks the traditional categories of

race, ethnicity, and gender. This discrepancy between definition and data puts the US Air Force in the dangerous position of seeming disingenuous in its efforts to highlight an expanded view of diversity. The US Air Force is the only military service that provides a litany of specific attributes while the other services are content with generalities.<sup>1</sup> The US Air Force must either discover a method of tracking the attributes listed in its definition or adopt a more traditional definition of diversity than delineates between demographic diversity and other diversity categories.<sup>2</sup>

The organization must also exercise caution in its desire to link diversity with improved mission effectiveness. This project has detailed many instances of official statements that explicitly link diversity with improved performance. This effort does indeed parallel the current literature on recommended diversity practices.<sup>3</sup> As outlined in Chapter One, purposeful diversity management is the key to reaping benefits from a diverse workforce, not diversity in and of itself. The US Air Force must avoid a simplified “add diversity and stir” approach to reaping the benefits from force diversity.<sup>4</sup> Although current literature and best practices support linking diversity with performance, the US Air Force must recognize that achieving true benefits from diversity requires a more nuanced approach that emphasizes purposeful diversity management. In other words, simply saying that a diverse force is a more effective force does not make it so.

In the recruiting and accessions arena, the US Air Force must focus its efforts on improving female and African-American officer demographics. This project has illustrated that female representation has stagnated at 20 percent for the last 25 years. In addition, African-American officer representation has declined over the last several years from all three primary commissioning sources. Refocusing efforts on female recruiting

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see Chapter 2, Table 1, page 4, that presents each military service’s definition of diversity.

<sup>2</sup> The official US Air Force definition includes the following attributes in addition to race, ethnicity, and gender: personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical/spiritual perspectives, and age. The US Air Force recognizes four different varieties of diversity in its “Air Force Leadership Diversity Toolkit” – a 2 page pamphlet designed to educate leaders on diversity. These four varieties – as detailed in Chapter 2 – are demographic, cognitive, structural, and global. See Chapter 2, page 4, for more detail on these diversity categories.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see Chapter 4, Figure 31, page 26, that lists “Diversity linked to performance” as a leading diversity management practice.

<sup>4</sup> Yvonne Benschop coined this phrase in her article “Pride, Prejudice and Performance: Relations between HRM, Diversity, and Performance.” *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 12, no. 7 (November 2001): 1166-1181.



seems to carry a secondary diversity benefit. Although further research is required on the underlying reasons, females in both the enlisted and officer ranks tend to be more diverse than their male counterparts.<sup>5</sup> As mentioned previously, the US Air Force has more positions open to females than any other military service. The organization must harness this benefit and actively engage with qualified females. Harkening back to the Tuskegee Airmen, the US Air Force has a strong tradition with African-American officers. The US Air Force must rekindle this legacy and focus its recruiting efforts on attracting the best and brightest in the African-American community.

In the same vein, the US Air Force must re-evaluate the role of the Officer Training School. OTS provides the best avenue for transferring diversity in the enlisted ranks into the officer corps. Currently, the Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) does not have a dedicated diversity recruiting office. With its mandate to recruit qualified civilians for the enlisted force, the AFRS is often unable to focus adequate attention on officer recruiting. OTS is also only currently responsible for commissioning approximately 10 percent of Active Duty officers each year.<sup>6</sup> The US Air Force should examine expanding the Officer Training School's annual production of commissioned officers. Of course this expansion would come at the expense of the other commissioning sources – a cost that requires further analysis. In addition, OTS only receives 10 percent of the annual slots for Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT), compared to 43 percent for the Air Force Academy and 43 percent for AFROTC.<sup>7</sup> OTS offers the US Air Force the opportunity to select the best and brightest of diverse enlisted Airmen for officer training. The organization should also consider emphasizing enlisted Airmen for OTS selection over qualified civilians with college degrees. At this point, the US Air Force is not maximizing OTS as a commissioning source for qualified, diverse enlisted Airmen.

In the area of retention, the US Air Force should focus its attention on female officers in the early stages of their career. During years four through eight, female

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<sup>5</sup> For example, see Chapter 2, Figures 12 and 13, page 15.

<sup>6</sup> These percentages come from the FY07 Population Representation in the Military Services which is published each year by the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

<sup>7</sup> UPT percentages obtained from AETC/A3R, Requirements and Resources Division. The last 4 percent of UPT slots are allocated to the Active Duty Flying Boards.

officers are much more likely to leave military service than their male counterparts.<sup>8</sup> All too often, female officers must choose between a military career and raising a family. Even though some issues are unavoidable – flying combat aircraft during certain trimesters of pregnancy, for example – the organization must strive to create an environment where female officers feel comfortable starting a family in addition to serving their military commitment. Male officers obviously have family care issues of their own, but the dramatic difference in retention rates implies this is an issue that uniquely affects women officers. If accessions for female officers continue to hover at 20 percent, the US Air Force can ill afford to lose women officers in large numbers after their initial commitments expire.

Chapter Three highlighted the integral role that diversity in the Pilot career field plays in the eventual diversity in the general officer corps. Although every career field in the US Air Force is vital to mission accomplishment, combat aviators are still at the pinnacle of the US Air Force. The organization cannot afford for this occupational field to remain a bastion of White males. By allowing cadets to retake the AFOQT later in their college career, AFROTC has effectively eliminated a major aviation training barrier for females and minorities. Although this step is beneficial, the US Air Force should reexamine the validity of the AFOQT for admission into flying training. After all, the Air Force Academy does not use the AFOQT as a discriminator for flying training. Regardless of AFOQT status, the US Air Force must focus its attention on diversifying the Pilot career field. This precision-guided recruiting effort would hopefully add diversity to a career field that continues to supply the majority of general officers.

In addition to these final recommendations, several areas require further study. Although designed to present a broad and intensive view of US Air Force officer diversity, this project simply cannot delve into every abnormality or curiosity. Based on research conducted during this project, the following areas require future study:

- **How does diversity enhance or hinder a military organization's actual fighting capability?** Almost all research in the area of diversity applies to military organizations in garrison. How does racial, ethnic, and gender diversity affect units in actual combat? Is it more or less of an issue than increased diversity during times of peace or for units in garrison?

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 3, Figure 22, page 13.

- **Why are female Airmen, both enlisted and officers, more diverse than their male counterparts?** Does the US Air Force recruit female candidates in ways that attract more diversity from that particular demographic? Or do females appreciate certain US Air Force opportunities that do not equally resonate with diverse males?
- **Are there are underlying cultural reasons behind the US Air Force's struggles in attracting certain racial and ethnic groups - Blacks and Hispanics particularly?** For example, have the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan damaged certain racial and ethnic groups' views of military service?
- **Is the AFOQT still a legitimate indicator of an individual's success in US Air Force flying training?** If the US Air Force Academy no longer uses the AFOQT as a criterion for screening candidates, should OTS and AFROTC follow suit?
- **Should the US Air Force continue to rely on the Pilot career field to supply the bulk of its general officers?** Obviously, certain general officer billets require combat aviation experience. In many cases, however, the organization places Pilots in career fields where aviation experience is not required. Particularly with the lack of diversity in aviation career fields, should the US Air Force reevaluate the experience required for certain general officer billets?
- **Should the US Air Force reconsider its Pilot service commitment?** Does the lengthy service commitment (currently 10 years) discourage females and minorities from entering the Pilot career field? Is it feasible to lower the service commitment for certain groups?

Based on the data presented throughout, this project ultimately concludes that the US Air Force does not have sufficient diversity in its officer corps or senior ranks. The first step in solving any problem is the recognition that a problem exists. To its credit, the US Air Force seems to recognize its current shortcomings in fielding a diverse officer corps. Senior leaders, including the Secretary of the Air Force and Air Force Chief of Staff, have espoused the importance of a diverse force in Air Force Diversity Statements and the recently released diversity video.<sup>9</sup> The service has established Diversity Champions – high-ranking individuals that have agreed to champion certain diversity issues. During the course of this project, the US Air Force made its biggest commitment thus far to fielding a diverse force. As directed by the Air Force Chief of Staff, the US Air Force is set to establish an Air Force Diversity Operations Office and Air Force

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<sup>9</sup> The Air Force Diversity and Equal Opportunity video is located at <http://www.af.mil/tv/index.asp?showid=6970> (accessed 5 May 09).

Diversity Committee.<sup>10</sup> The proposed Diversity Office has a robust manning and funding plan. In the past, the Air Staff, commissioning sources, Air Force Recruiting Service, and various other entities all pursued their own diversity efforts. Centralization and coordination of both strategic direction and funding is paramount to success. As the comprehensive analysis of the officer career pipeline in Chapter Three illustrated, fielding a diverse force is much more than simply recruiting more diverse candidates. Recent US Air Force efforts will aid in creating quality diversity management programs that stretch from recruiting and accessions all the way to the ranks of general officer.

The US Air Force will succeed in fielding a diverse force. Over the course of this project, this researcher encountered military and civilian personnel that were both cognizant of the service's shortcomings and energized to rectify the situation. The US Air Force already has a strong legacy of promoting diversity. The Tuskegee Airmen became the first African-American military aviators during a time when many ignorantly assumed African-Americans lacked the skill or intelligence to pilot advanced airplanes. The Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) of WWII were the first women in history to fly American military aircraft. During World War II, 300 volunteers from Mexico formed the Aztec Eagles and flew fighter aircraft against the Japanese in the Pacific theater. In June of 1949, the Air Force published regulations ending segregation, becoming the first military service to complete integration of African-American personnel into all-white units. In 1975, Hoang Nhu Tran escaped Saigon hours before the city fell to the North Vietnamese – 12 years later, Hoang was valedictorian at the US Air Force Academy and a Rhodes Scholar. In 1999, US Air Force Colonel Eileen Collins became the first woman to command a space shuttle mission. Today, females have joined the US Air Force Thunderbirds and wow audiences around the world.

Throughout its storied 60 year history, brave Airmen of all races and ethnicities – male and female – have answered the call to put “Service Before Self.” To rekindle this legacy, the US Air Force must simply take its story to the American people. Whether piloting fighter aircraft or maneuvering satellites, young Americans from all walks of life

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<sup>10</sup> This researcher's only critique of the current plan is the placement of the Diversity Office. Current plans call for the office to fall under AF/A1 as opposed to reporting directly to the SECAF and CSAF. The US Army's diversity office has a direct reporting chain to the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff. Based on research for this project, the new Diversity Office should report directly to the top service leaders.

can once again welcome the opportunity to fly, fight, and win in air, space, and cyberspace. The US Air Force must do its part, however, and ensure opportunity for all, not the select few. The US Air Force's legacy of diversity is bright. With the proper effort and attention, the future can be even brighter.

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